





HEBREW POLITICS

IN THE TIMES OF

SARGON AND SENNACHERIB:

AN INQUIRY

INTO

THE HISTORICAL MEANING AND PURPOSE OF THE PROPHECIES
OF ISAIAH,

WITH SOME NOTICE OF

THEIR BEARINGS ON THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL
LIFE OF ENGLAND.

BY^{ED} EDWARD STRACHEY.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.
1853.

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Their orators thou then extoll'st, as those
The top of eloquence; statista indeed,
And lovers of their country, as may seem;
But herein to our Prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government
In their majestic, unaffected style,
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat;
These only with our Law best form a king.

Paradise Regained, IV. 353.

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THE WINGED BULLS AND ALABASTER BAS-RELIEFS NOW BROUGHT FROM THE PALACES OF SARGON AND SENNACHERIB, AND THEIR ANNALS NOW IN COURSE OF DECIPHERMENT, HAVE ALREADY THROWN A NEW LIGHT ON THE HEBREW HISTORIANS AND PROPHETS OF THE SAME PERIOD. ALTHOUGH THE INTERPRETATION OF THE INSCRIPTIONS MUST BE FARTHER CONFIRMED, AS WELL AS CARRIED OUT, BEFORE WE CAN ESTIMATE OUR GAIN AS TO NEW FACTS, WE ALREADY FIND THAT THE OLD FACTS HAVE BEGUN TO SEEM MORE REAL. FOR IF THE ADDITIONAL RAYS OF LIGHT ARE STILL FEW, AND THE FIELD OF VISION NOT MUCH EXTENDED, YET THERE IS JUST THAT EXTENSION WHICH GIVES THE ROUNDNESS AND SOLIDITY OF ACTUAL LIFE TO WHAT HAD HITHERTO SOMEWHAT OF THE FLATNESS OF A MERE PICTURE, UNLESS WE COULD FILL OUT THE UNAIDED JEWISH ACCOUNTS BY AN EFFORT OF THE IMAGINATION. WHO DOES NOT KNOW THE SENSE OF DEFECT, WHEN HE HAS ONLY ONE ACCOUNT OF GREAT HISTORICAL EVENTS? WHO HAS NOT FELT IT, IN PARTICULAR, AS TO THE HEBREW HISTORY, HITHERTO LEFT — EXCEPT FOR A FEW FRAGMENTS — WITHOUT THAT KIND OF CONFIRMATION WHICH EVEN VERY OPPOSITE ACCOUNTS GIVE TO EACH OTHER? HOWEVER SURE WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN, THAT THERE WAS NO ESSENTIAL MISREPRESENTATION IN THE PHILIPPICS OF THE HEBREW DEMOSTHENES, WHEN HE DENOUNCED THE IMPERIAL CONQUERORS WHO ‘TROD DOWN

men as the mire of the streets, removed the bounds of the nations, found as a nest their riches, and gathered all the earth as one gathers eggs:’ — yet we are not the less glad to read the Assyrians’ own accounts of the way in which father and son did, year by year, and from country to country, receive tribute from the kings who submitted, and conquer and punish by captivity or death those who resisted; carrying off their gods, their chief men, their treasures of gold and silver, their horses and cattle, nay, the whole inhabitants, men and women; and giving up the cities to pillage, and then restoring them under new vassals: so that of each emperor, and of each year of his reign, we may say in Colonel Rawlinson’s words, ‘his annals contain the usual amount of burning and plundering, sweeping off the old population, and planting fresh colonies in their place.’ We knew from Isaiah that all this must have been so; but the mind is not the less pleased to have independent evidence that it was so: — to find its inferences realised in facts.

The antiquarian is not, however, the chief interest of these times of Sargon and Sennacherib. Our latest historians of Greece and Rome are showing us, as in a mirror, the very lineaments of our own age. They tell us of soldiers who followed their leaders to certain death, in obedience to the orders of those who sent them, expecting every man to do his duty: and of citizens whose political vices and even passions, as well as virtues, and the causes of their national decay, no less than their national growth, are all found within the circle of constitutional government, with its juries and its parliaments, its administrations headed by the highborn, the

rich, and the respectable, and its opposition led by speakers who used the most unlicensed violence of words, without a thought of overstepping the forms of the constitution by act, and whom the people half despised as plebeian, while they supported them as the necessary check on the aristocratic men whom they preferred to have in office. Again they show us, how constitutional freedom of thought and action in politics degenerated into individual selfishness or self-will, so that each man held it his right, or, if he was a fanatic, his duty, to enforce his own private view or interest, without regard to the good of the commonwealth: and how, when this vice had become incurable, the most enlightened patriots agreed with the most timid or selfish lovers of order, that nothing was left for the state but simple military despotism; nothing in religion, but an organised superstition without faith:—which despotism and superstition would do nothing, indeed, towards restoring the life of the nation, but would make its inevitable death more gradual, and less convulsive, than if they continued to try successive forms of anarchy under the pretence of regaining liberty: and they show us how the civil skill of an Augustus built up this necessary system of state-craft, for which the sword of his predecessor had cleared the ground. These things, and much more, they tell us, and we know how to make the application. But when it is made, it announces an inevitable law of national decay and death, which is to take effect upon us too, as well as upon Greece or Rome; rather than a moral warning, with direction how we may escape our threatened destiny: and it is this latter that we feel we want, and of which we will not abandon the

hope that it may be still found. We know that in our personal experience the moral laws of spirit do control and modify the laws of nature, and in the end produce a result which, though apparently in accordance with the latter, is really the complete triumph of the former:—that the body grows old and dies, but that the man himself may all the while have been growing up towards the maturity of an imperishable life. And we apply the analogy to our country. We observe that all nations that have hitherto perished, have perished, partly at least, of disease originating in political vices: and we conclude, that if immortality is no more possible to a nation than to anything else on earth, it must be possible that its decay should be that of simple and healthy old age; that it should be altogether honourable and honoured, in that old age, by the young nations that spring from it; and that it should leave to them the inheritance of a wholly noble character and spirit, and not merely that mixture of vices and virtues, of wisdom and error, which has come down to it from its great predecessors.

This, then, is the important matter to us: whether the law of disease, which, as distinguished from that of age, is so plainly at work in England, as well as in every other nation of Europe, can be still arrested; and in particular, whether there is truth in that half-forgotten faith of our statesmen in former days, that the political history of the Hebrews does contain indications of the remedy, as well as the disease, though the latter only is described in the books of Greece and Rome: whether, for instance, Milton, who was no mean statesman in a day when men had to show what was really in them,

and who had no lack of knowledge as to what the ancients could teach us of politics, was right when he asserted of the Jewish books, that

In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so.

To get an answer to this question for myself; to ascertain whether an English squire could find in the Bible any political instruction which might avail him at union boards and county elections, and in his relations with the parson and the magistrate, the farmer and the peasant; was my purpose when I began the study of the writings of Isaiah many years since: and the hope of serving some one desirous of such information, might have seemed to me excuse enough for thus attempting to show what I had learnt of the internal politics of Judea, and of their relation to those of modern England. But, meanwhile, there are gathering signs, that the times of Isaiah, and the principles which he enunciated, are finding, and may find more and more, their counterpart, and their application, in our foreign relations too. It may not be only Hebrew politics, but Hebrew politics in their connection with Sargon and Sennacherib, that we want to study. We may know already what the prophet meant by his protests against 'the new moons and sabbaths, and the making many prayers;' and against the 'land full of silver and gold, where men join house to house, and field to field, and grind the faces of the poor, and right not the fatherless, and justify the wicked for reward, and are prudent in their own sight, but regard not the work of the Lord, nor the operation of His hands.' We may know, too, or hope to know, something of the contrary state of things,

when righteous and just rulers and princes show how 'a man can be a covert from the tempest;' and how he can 'devise liberal things for the poor and needy, and fill the land with knowledge and understanding, and break every yoke.' But our country has, within the last four years, become almost as isolated, though not as weak, as Judea, in the midst of military despotisms. Our old notions of law and liberty, in religion and in government, are shocked by acts and maxims which remind us of the Assyrian's boast, that 'By the grace of my god Assarac I have done it,' or, 'By the strength of my hand, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent.' And while the political moralist now, as in Isaiah's day, recognises a needful discipline for each nation in these things, and asks himself what cause his own country can show why she should wholly escape it, he thinks — we all think at times — of the possibility of a contest in which not our mere lives, or even the life of our nation, but the life — all that deserves the name of life — of the world itself, will be at stake: nor is the faith wanting among us that, in such a contest, God will have work for 'his Englishmen,' as Milton calls us. Men's various tempers, and the changeable events of the day, may variously incline, or disincline, them to believe that the contest will be one with fleets and armies: but no one doubts that—in the one sense or the other—a war of principles is at hand, or rather begun already. And, if so, it is worth our while to inquire what we may learn of those principles in a book which professes to set them forth in direct form, and with a practical, and for us illustrative, application to the political events of the writer's own time. If the principles of Isaiah

are the true ones, his demonstration of them will not be the less clear and instructive, because his diagram is the simple constitution, and the little state, of Judea, and we are interested in the commonwealth of England, with its complicated organisation and mighty power.

The reader must not, however, suppose that I have employed the writings of Isaiah to set forth and enforce some system of dogmas, political or theological, of my own. I have applied myself to the prophet, simply to learn from him whatever I might find he had to teach an English citizen: I have taken the book as it stands: and, while availing myself of the stores of thought and learning which the commentators of various schools have provided, I have, to the best of my ability, handled the book itself by the method of the Niebuhrs and the Grotes, and treated it as they — with thorough freedom and thorough reverence — treat the classical books. Wherever the method led, I have followed: and I now offer the sketch-map of my route to any one who may intend to take the same road for himself, and be willing to accept such help as it can give. If he finds its use real, he will, I trust, pardon some repetitions of statement which, if not inevitable to my plan, I have not had the skill to avoid.

The special, but important, question, as to the genuineness of parts of the book; which has been debated on theological and speculative grounds during the last sixty years, but on which each school still refuses to accept the conclusion of the other; I have ventured to examine by the same — the positive — method. With what result, the reader will judge.

I have given, in their proper places, the latest readings of the Cuneiform Inscriptions according to Colonel Rawlinson and Dr. Hincks; and have shown their bearings upon the Jewish accounts, as well as upon the notices in the classical writers, and in Berosus and the other Oriental annalists of whom a few fragments have come down to us:—so far as relates to the times I have treated of. But I have been careful to distinguish our main standing-ground; which is independent of the Inscriptions, and will hold firm though the present interpretations of these should hereafter be set aside in part, or altogether. Of this, however, the best authorities have the least expectation; and, in addition to what others have published on the subject, Mr. Norris, of the Asiatic Society, permits me to give, with the weight of his name, the following note, in which he states the case more lucidly, I think, than has yet been done:—

“ I believe the general tenour of the reading of Assyrian monuments is quite correct, about as correct as would be the reading of a Latin historical document by an intelligent Italian, who knew no more of Latin than what he might have learned through a general study of antiquities, and a comparison with the roots and forms of his own tongue: and it must be remembered that the monuments we have from Assyria are couched in the very plainest and simplest language. The reading of foreign names too is, I believe, accurate: of native names we have less certainty, as it appears to have been the practice of the writers rather to indicate a name than to spell it:—to designate their monarchs rather as the favourites of this or that particular god or goddess, than

as having vulgar names, to be written with common letters. Hezekiah, Menahem, Jehu, &c. I believe to be quite sure, and there is reason to suppose that other foreign names are equally ascertained: but monograms of gods are much less manageable, though even here we have now and then collateral aids which render probabilities all but certainties."

Such collateral aids are found in the coincidence of the Hebrew, and fragmentary Greek, accounts — confirmed in one case by a local name — with those statements of the Inscriptions which, being written in the ordinary manner, have been deciphered by the ordinary methods. Thus, within the pile of ruins which bore the name of Sarghun as late as the Arab conquest, were found inscriptions which state, among other things, that the builder was king of Assyria and Babylon, and swept away Samaria, and reduced Tyre and Ashdod; and the annals of his successor relate, that he invaded Judea in order to compel Hezekiah to pay his accustomed tribute, and defeated the kings of Egypt and Meroe, who came to help their Jewish ally:—with various details of names and facts, corresponding with those of the Hebrew history. And, if it be admitted that these names and facts can be so far deciphered, the conclusion is inevitable, that these two Assyrian kings, under whatever monograms their own names are concealed, were the Sargon and Sennacherib of Isaiah.

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HEBREW POLITICS.

CHAPTER I.

THE GREEK ORATOR. — THE HEBREW PROPHET. — THE MODERN PREACHER.
— SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS. — THE BOOK OF ISAIAH. — ITS ARRANGEMENT — ITS UNITY. — HYPOTHETICAL AND POSITIVE CRITICISM. — NIEBUHR'S CANONS.

THE Spartan king told Xerxes that he was no match for the Greeks, 'because they, though free, had a master — the law — over them, which they feared more than the Persians did his despotic will.' And the Athenian orator, looking back on the great struggle after a generation or two had passed, gave his countrymen the same explanation of their fathers' success 'against the barbarian myriads of the king of Asia:' he pointed out how 'they had done such noble and wonderful deeds, because they were already organised into a free commonwealth in which the good were honoured, and the bad restrained, by law; because they knew and held that it should be left to brute beasts to control each other by mutual violence, such as oriental kings and subjects lived by, but that it became men to define rights by law, to persuade to its maintenance or expansion by rational and instructive speech, and in their conduct to follow the guidance of both these, — the law their king, and speech their teacher.'

The orator enunciated an eternal truth. Had it been less than eternal, it could not be still keeping its ground, and still sustaining the life of every nation which holds to it, or

indeed, although we (not to judge of others) hold never so imperfectly to it: for though we are ready enough to thank God that we English are not as other men, we might more reasonably reflect how often we are all on the verge of doing what lies in us to disturb the perfect play of those two forces, of entire obedience to the law and absolute right of discussion, according as either may check some private opinion or class interest; and how seldom we remember that one step beyond that verge lies the region of mutual violence with the correlates of despotism and insurrection in which *its* vitality consists. But this truth, this universal law of human society, has not only outlasted the politics of Greece, but was not first discovered there, as the Athenians supposed; nor was the exercise of this master right and power of words 'so originally and peculiarly the possession of Greeks alone among all living creatures, that' (as their panegyrist goes on to say) 'if any other people did acquire it from them, this only extended the name of Grecian to distinctions of mind as well as race, so that they were called by it who shared their education rather than those who had their blood.' Another people had been set, many centuries earlier, to work out some of the same, with some very different, problems of human society, and under not wholly dissimilar conditions, internal and external: and while the Hebrew as well as the Greek could have pointed to various other proofs that his was a commonwealth, or constitutionally organised body-politic, as distinguished from the inorganic despotisms of Assyria or Persia, the one fixed on the same marks as the other did, as the characteristic ones: the 'Nomos and Logos' of the Greek were anticipated by their true counterparts the 'Law and the Prophets' of the Hebrew.

Isaiah, no less than Demosthenes, might have said that it was the office of the political speaker and adviser, 'to see events in their beginnings, to discern their purport and tendencies from the first, and to forewarn his countrymen accordingly; to confine within the narrowest bounds those political vices of habitual procrastination, supineness, ignorance, and love of strife, which are inevitable in all states; and to dispose men's minds instead to enlightened concord and unanimity, and to the zealous discharge of their social duties:' and he too might have added,

‘All these things have I done, and no creature can say that I have ever left any of them undone; I do not shrink from your scrutiny, be it never so strict.’* But there were differences as well as resemblances between the orator and the prophet, and we must look for further illustrations elsewhere.

If we were to describe a nation, in the political constitution of which was found an incorporated and endowed body of men, with the business of caring for all those interests of the nation which did not fall under the heads of trade, agriculture, war, or domestic and feudal (that is, patriarchal) government; who practised the more difficult branches of medicine, law, and statesmanship; who bestowed a religious consecration on all states of national, family, and personal life—delivering the crown and sceptre to the sovereign in trust from the King of kings, joining the hands of man and wife in the name of God, and enrolling, as a citizen, the babe who has just before been received into the congregation; who claimed the right, and acknowledged the duty, of educating every member of the nation to apprehend his privileges and obligations, not only as a citizen, but as a man, and of teaching him that his greatest dignity and happiness, and his truest and deepest communion with his fellow-men and with God, belong to him as a man, and will be his in proportion as this, his proper humanity, is renewed in him; and who rescued one day in each week from worldly employments, devoting it to public worship and holy rest, and thus providing the opportunity and means for keeping up that consecration of the nation, and for carrying on that education of the people:—if we were to draw such a picture, it would suit equally the old constitutions of England and the other nations of Christendom, and that of the Jewish nation, whence their model was, no doubt, derived. And though decay and growth have conspired to efface many of the original characteristics of the ‘Church of England,’ and to provide other means for the execution of many of its old functions, it is

* Demosthenes, *de Coronâ*, c. 73. This, and the preceding passages from Herodotus (vii. 104.), Lysias (ii. 17—20.), and Isocrates (iv. 53—56.), are pointed out as characteristic of the political life of Greece, by Mr. Grote: *History*, vii. 498., ix. 116.

still not only the best, but a thoroughly effective illustration of the analogous 'estate of the realm' of Israel.

It is an obscure, though interesting, inquiry what was the rightful (we know what was the corrupt) practice of the Hebrew people, and their ministers the Levites, as to the *local* worship of the LORD God. The practice among the patriarchs, and in the early commonwealth, of setting up an altar on every spot which had been hallowed by some manifestation of God's power or favour; the organisation of the synagogues, all over the country, in later times; the character of the nation so religious in spirit and not merely in forms; the story of Elijah building the altar on Mount Carmel; are among the indications of what in itself seems so probable, that during the middle ages of the nation there may have been modes of local worship of the true God in accordance with the design with which Moses had scattered the Levites among the people, and which were not comprehended in those repeated denunciations of the worship of 'the High Places' which occur throughout the histories of the kings. Be this as it may, the ecclesiastical law of the Israelites at least appointed the Levites to perform the sacrifices and other services of the tabernacle or temple; to assist in, and give a religious sanction to, all the main proceedings of the nation and its kings; to instruct the people in the law,—for which end they had the tithes allotted to them, that they might reside in every part of the country when their turn was past for attending at the temple; to keep the genealogies and other records of the state; and to administer what we should now call its sanitary code. And out of this spirituality, or order of clergy, grew the institution and order of PROPHETS, or preachers, educated in colleges or *schools of the Prophets*. Such colleges existed at Ramah, Bethel, Jericho, Gilgal, and Jerusalem; there was a president or 'father,' in which office we find Samuel and Elisha; and his disciples and associates, who bore the names of 'sons of the prophets,' lived with him in a common habitation, and shared a common table. We are told that they 'prophesied with the psaltery, tabret, pipe, and harp:' their writings show them to have been students, nay masters, of poetry, rhetoric, and philosophy, as well as of music; and they were historians, though only brief abstracts

of their historical works survive : practical, no less than speculative and literary, politicians, they habitually show themselves educated to the use of the mental and moral powers which were required for advising their kings, at home and in foreign affairs ; and — what belonged to a still higher training — for advising and directing the people how to resist those kings when the latter set the constitution deliberately at nought, and yet not fall into the same guilt themselves. There seems no reason for supposing that kings and princes were not, when they pleased, educated in these schools, as well as the prophets. It was eminently a national education : in the Psalms, Prophets, and other Scriptures of the Old (nay, of the New) Testament, we see its results, extending through the whole life of the nation for 1500 years : in the Pentateuch we see how its foundations were laid by the great Hebrew legislator, in furtherance of his design, that all nations should have cause to say, ‘ Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people ; ’ and in the historical notices, brief as they are, of these schools of the prophets, we have just the fact of an adequate working instrument, to connect the design and the results. But though regular education was not less, neither was it more, important in the Hebrew than in other nations. The prophet Amos says, ‘ I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son ; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit : and the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.’ And no doubt this was not the only instance in a body, of whom one of the characteristic features was that they should not belong exclusively to any one tribe, or rank, or profession, and that each should ‘ speak as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.’ Yet here as elsewhere the settled institutions of the country will have exercised their due influence in forming the character even of those individuals who did not come into immediate contact with them.

The prophets were the preachers, not the predictors, the forth-speakers of God’s eternal plan and methods of governing man, not foretellers of particular events, of and to their nation : this was what our Lord and his apostles understood by the name, and so has it always been understood in modern times of earnestness and zeal, such as our Reformation or Civil War, when men

interpreted the Bible by experience gained in the council-chamber, the battle-field, or the prison, rather than by collation of commentators.* And while we may pursue our illustration by comparing the schools of the prophets with the monasteries and colleges which have hitherto sent out most, if not all, the great prophets of Christendom, as well as the multitude of ordinary teachers, we shall find a real and instructive resemblance between these and the Hebrew prophets. The sermons and other discourses, of a Latimer at Paul's Cross, of a Luther at the Diet of Worms, or a Knox before the Popish queen and nobles; the field-preachings of a Wesley or Whitfield, and, within narrower limits, the orations of a Burke in defence of justice, laws, institutions; — these, taken with the lives and acts, and, where need was, the deaths of the men, are the true counterparts of what Isaiah and the rest of the Hebrew prophets said, did, or suffered.

But facts — facts in their detail, and in their original and living coherence, are our best teachers. We shall best learn what the prophets were to the Jews, and what they are to us, by a methodical examination of what the greatest of them said and did, during a chief crisis of his country's history. The meaning of facts came to light in the collision of the Assyrian empire with the Hebrew commonwealth, as they did when Xerxes invaded Greece, or Napoleon overran Europe: and if we will take the book of Isaiah, and follow its guidance, we may expect to see its facts in their own proper light. This, therefore, I propose to do. The reader will find the English text, for reference, at the end of the volume.

As our familiarity with this Book of Isaiah increases, we find that the careful literary composition and elaborate finish of the single prophecies, noticeable as it is, is less so than that with which these are again fused into larger, but not less organic members, and these again into one perfect

* Matt. iii. 1—12., xi. 9—14.; Luke, i. 17. 76, 77.; Rom. xii. 6.; 1 Cor. xi. 4.; xiv. 6., &c. Milton hopes (in his *Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*), that England is on the eve of becoming 'a nation of prophets:' and Jeremy Taylor entitles his book on the like subject, *A Discourse of the Liberty of Propheying*, without any intimation that he is using the word in an unusual sense.

whole. And the most simple and probable explanation of this arrangement, if there be no insurmountable obstacle to its acceptance, is plainly to attribute it to Isaiah himself. If it can be shown that this explanation, of the prophet's own arrangement of the book in its present form, is absolutely incompatible with the undoubted nature of its contents, we must give it up, and refer the compilation to such later date as the exigencies of the case require; but we must not overlook that the latter is on the face of it the hypothetical and speculative, and the former the historical and positive criticism. For the arrangement of the book, with its general and particular titles and its historical notices, together with all that these assert (till contradicted) as to the authorship, have come down to us from time immemorial by exactly the same means as the text itself, of which they must therefore be taken to be an integral and original part, until the contrary is proved; and the one no less than the other must be protected by that canon of criticism, that no conjecture, however ingenious, must disturb the integrity of the text however obscure, until the actual reading has been shown to be hopelessly corrupt. We cannot altogether dispense with supposition and conjecture as helps to the elucidation of such parts of this book as, by reason of their antiquity, must now remain without any more certain explanation; nor need we doubt that conjectural criticism often throws a real, though a flickering, light on objects which are but dimly discernible in the distance of ages, if only the torch be kindled by a mind thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the writer commented on, and held in steady, that is judicious, hands. The studious and meditative genius of the German eminently qualifies him for these speculative inquiries and explanations; but while the Englishman avails himself of them, with the frank acknowledgment that he could never have originated them himself, he must not scruple to test and modify them by the practical common sense which is *his* birthright, and which, if a more modest, is not a less useful gift than the other. Nor must we forget that Niebuhr, the greatest of the German critics of this kind, himself pointed out the true method of testing his own and all other such conclusions. He constantly endeavours to verify his hardy conjectures by reference to corre-

sponding facts of other times and countries, and thus to ascertain that he is not dreaming, but discovering and applying the real laws of history; and his method is not the less the true one, though grave English scholars may sometimes think his particular conclusions those of the advocate rather than the judge. To exhaust the evidence and the arguments on every side of a question is the German's proper calling: and I believe that the help of the German commentators is indispensable to our thorough understanding of the Prophecies of Isaiah; yet that they will be most serviceable to him who can best check speculation with not literal but matter-of-fact criticism; who can abstain from doubting historical facts because cotemporary records relate them in ways not easy of verbal reconciliation, or in phrases not the most obvious or likely if tried by the standard of his own mind; and who is content to account for all such minor difficulties and discrepancies in the same way as he must the like ones which he finds in the books of his own day, and which the still living authors cannot, or do not, explain. Commentators often darken the text with the mists of their own undue speculativeness; and by returning to a more practical method of investigation, by studying the book as it is, and not as ingenious theorists say it must have been, we shall often secure a firm pathway through difficulties that conjecture has hopelessly perplexed.

The arrangement of the Book of Isaiah's Prophecies, as it has come down to us, is mainly chronological, yet sometimes with reference to the subjects rather than to the dates of the several pieces which form it. A like method is observable in St. Matthew's Gospel, in which the miracles, parables, and discourses of our Lord are collected into groups without strict regard to the order of time; and the Pentateuch, the Book of Psalms, and the Bible itself as a whole, show that the appropriateness of such composite arrangement has been recognised by the Jewish and the Christian Church. And we have a modern instance of the kind, with an exposition of its importance, in Mr. Wordsworth's avowedly deliberate arrangement of his poems into a whole.

The particular arguments will be found in their several places: the general conclusion I deduce from them is, that

chapter vi. is the account of Isaiah's consecration to the prophetic office, and its date the earliest in the book; that the three preceding discourses (chapters i., ii.—iv., v.) are placed first, in order to set forth the state of the nation at the time Isaiah began to prophesy, and the consequent fitness of the severe terms of the commission given him; and that the rest of the book preserves the chronological order, with possibly such modifications as might serve to bring together similar prophecies, such as the series of 'burdens' on the neighbouring nations; and probably also in certain cases (chapters vii.—xii., xvii. xviii., xxviii.—xxxv., xl.—lxvi.) with some revision and fusion of discourses originally distinct, so that they are now successive paragraphs in a continuous writing. The supposed insurmountable obstacles to the acceptance of the historical assertion involved in the book itself, that it owes its present form to Isaiah's own hand, are the account of the 'Sign' of the shadow going back on the dial, and the doubt—which, indeed, the most eminent German critics say is not a doubt, but a final decision in the negative,—whether certain portions of the book were written by Isaiah at all. These will be best considered as they occur; only I will here observe, that in examining the latter question, the student must be on his guard against the fallacy contained in an argument sometimes employed as to the arrangement of the book, and which supposes it to be a collection like those which are popularly called the 'Psalms of David,' and the 'Proverbs of Solomon,' though it is admitted that only a portion of each can be ascribed to its nominal author. The fallacy is in assuming that there is no difference between a real title, and a popular name, of a book. In the Hebrew the respective titles are, 'Isaiah,' 'Psalms,' 'Proverbs,' with no names attached to the two last; and both of these contain special titles expressly attributing various portions to other authors, while the whole book of Isaiah is almost as expressly attributed to him. Let the reader test the reality of this historical evidence (without prejudice to the internal counter-evidence we may come to by-and-by) by asking himself how we could strengthen it, even now we know the attack it has to stand. On the other hand, let me entreat him to keep his eyes open to the actual arrangement of the book, as we follow

its detail. If we find indications that the whole, looked at as a whole, is more like the growth of an individual mind than a collection of writings of men who lived in times far apart from each other; if we can, as we proceed, trace the manner and method in which the prophet's views opened out, as he came in contact with, and sought for the deepest springs of, the circumstances and events of his own times; then the proportion and relation of particular parts to each other and to the whole will become an important element of the question, and those of which the genuineness is disputed will be seen in a light, and with advantages, not available to us if we merely analyse each separately. The fact of such a vital coherence and interdependence will, I believe, become more and more apparent as we go on; we shall find a harmony resulting not from mere mechanical compilation, but from the presence of a one informing and enlivening spirit, and our reason no less than our religious feeling will resist the dismemberment of any part of the perfectly organised whole. And if so, we shall (as can hardly be too often repeated) escape from the hypothetical to the positive and the historical.

But the hypothetical criticism has its own rebound; and the very commentators who are least sensitive to the weight of evidence in favour of the facts we have, are most ingenious in making out more and more historical dates and details of what they say *must* have been the events of Isaiah's time, and alluded to by him in his prophecies. Such criticism is valuable, in as far as it is a real induction; and an un hoped for, and most interesting verification of it is now in progress by the help of the Cuneiform Inscriptions, which are already found to mention several facts which the Bible historians had passed in silence, but which are precisely those which the student of the prophets knew to be wanted, and which he had to assume in any attempt to form a distinct picture of the times. But the limit of real induction is soon reached; and it has grown the fashion to expatiate beyond it till the commentator becomes unable to distinguish between facts and fancy. Each sees the error in his neighbour; but we shall perhaps best guard against it in ourselves if we consider that we possess no such power of discovering more than a mere outline of the facts on which any

such book, even written by a still living author, is founded: no two men, even though fellow-countrymen and cotemporaries, look at the same facts in exactly the same light, nor does either draw exactly the same inferences as the other would; and especially, perhaps, is this the case in writings in which the imagination of the poet or orator has a large part, because it is one of the prerogatives of the imagination not to be tied down to literal facts, but to modify, while it employs, these instruments of illustrating universal ideas or laws. It might have seemed the easiest thing possible to supply the facts assumed in most of Wordsworth's poems, by a simple enough use of the 'higher criticism;' but the actual statement of those facts in his lately published *Life* shows that they were quite different from what any criticism could have suspected.* We must admit of the Hebrew, what Niebuhr asserts of the Greek and Latin, literature, — that though we may be able to see that *some* facts were present to the writer's mind, it is often no more possible to re-piece them into an historical statement than it is to restore the statues or columns to which we know must have once belonged those marble fragments which we see everywhere built into the walls in modern Rome. We must be content with him to define the true interpretation of an ancient book as 'an expression of its meaning as it was understood, if not by its cotemporaries, yet by those who lived shortly after, *when the passing allusions of the moment were lost.*'† Nor is it merely lapse of

* He presents, as though he had himself witnessed, various occurrences related to him by his sister; he also says of the *Evening Walk*, — "The plan of it has not been confined to a particular walk, or an individual place; a proof (of which I was unconscious at the time) of my unwillingness to submit the poetic spirit to the chains of fact and real circumstance. The country is idealised rather than described in any one of its local aspects." — *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 68. Southey supplies us with another illustration: — "In one point I thought him (Sir George Beaumont) too much of an artist; none of his pictures represented the scene from which he took them; he took the features, and disposed them in the way which pleased him best. . . . You shall see a little piece of his . . . which perfectly illustrates this: the subject is this very house, and scarcely any one object in the picture resembles the reality. His wish was to give the character, the spirit of the scene" — *Life and Correspondence*, vol. vi. p. 216.

† *Letter to a Student of Philology*, translated in the *Educational Magazine* for January, 1840, and since then in his *Life and Letters*.

time which prevents our now recovering all the detail of the facts present to the eyes or minds of Isaiah, or the other prophets. Jeremiah's statement (chap. xxxvi. 2. 4.), that in the fourth year of Jehoiakim he wrote in a book all the words that he had spoken during a period of about twenty years: the fact that the short book of Micah is a summary of his discourses delivered during three reigns, as we learn from its title: the existence of like titles and inscriptions throughout the Prophetical Books: the explanatory narratives in some of them, and the manner in which these are introduced: the exact rhythmical structure, and elaborate finish of the composition, both of thoughts and language: all show that the writings of the prophets, as we now have them, are not verbal reports of their discourses set down before, or at the moment of, delivery, but careful literary compositions, in which these national preachers, at their leisure, and with the deliberate judgment and ability which the books themselves exhibit, put on record what was of permanent interest to their countrymen, and to all coming ages and peoples. And in doing this they would certainly (like men in the same circumstances now) obliterate, or suffer to become indistinct, references to events which were of absorbing interest at the moment of *speaking*, but which had given place to others at the time of *writing*, perhaps many years afterwards, though the eternal and universal truths which those particular events had best illustrated then, continued as important, and as worthy of proclamation as ever.* Nor need we lament that we cannot restore these marks which the prophets have not themselves thought it necessary to retain. They are not only not necessary for a right understanding of our authors, but would have been a real hindrance: for they would have inevitably overlaid those universal truths, those clear enunciations of the laws of God's government of the world, which they teach us to see in all history, and especially in our own, and in which — and not in picking out stray historical facts — the real interest of the Hebrew prophets for us consists. But if some commentators are

* See Ewald, *Die Propheten*, i. 42. There is a translation of the first two sections of the Introduction (to which I thus refer) in Kitto's *Journal of Sacred Literature*, for January, 1853. Let me here acknowledge my many and great obligations to this profound religious philosopher.

thus mistaken in their anxiety to invent what they cannot find, others go into the other extreme of indifference to those links between the prophet and his own times which do actually remain, and are so important in enabling us to feel that he was a real flesh and blood man: the middle, matter-of-fact course of taking just what we really have given us, is the best, alike for historical and for philosophical and theological purposes.

CHAPTER II.

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH. — ITS TITLE. — DATE OF CHAPTER I. — PROPHETIC IMAGINATION. — HEBREW ORATORY RHYTHMICAL. — PARALLELS IN OTHER NATIONS. — CONTENTS OF CHAPTER I. — TIMES OF UZZIAH AND JOTHAM. — FORMS AND SPIRIT. — NATIONAL BROTHERHOOD. — POLITICAL IDEALS.

THE book begins with its title: — ‘The vision of Isaiah, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.’

This is at once the title of the whole book, and the title of the chapter of which it forms the first verse; so as to indicate that the chapter is an introduction to the book, and a summary of its contents. If we compare it with the similar titles to the books of Amos and Micah, we may see from that comparison that there is no need for the conjecture of Vitringa, adopted by so many of his successors, that it, at first, ended with the word ‘Jerusalem,’ and belonged only to the single prophecy contained in the first chapter, and that some compiler of the book added the rest of the sentence to make a title for the whole. That the expression, ‘concerning Judah and Jerusalem,’ should be thus prefixed to prophecies which relate to Ephraim, Egypt, Assyria, and other neighbouring nations, will not appear a difficulty (if it ever did so), when we bear in mind that the language of the Hebrew, and above all, of the Hebrew prophet, regards the life and force rather than the formal accuracy of its expressions. The highest kind of accuracy indeed, that which distinguishes and asserts the real differences and relations of things, it has; but it is careless of, or rather unacquainted with, that classical precision of word and inference which all European discourse is more or less imbued with. For the destiny of all these nations did in truth ‘concern’ Judah and Jerusalem, and only for this reason became the object of Isaiah’s consideration. ‘Whatever he

utters against the heathen nations, he says it all for the sake of Judah.' *

But while this first prophecy, or discourse, forms a suitable summary and introduction to the whole book, and its actual place is thus sufficiently accounted for, there seems no reason for doubting that it was delivered on some special occasion. Its date therefore comes in question, and this must be decided according as we take verses 7, 8. to describe the actual state of the country when the words were uttered, or as prophetic of what it would shortly become. If the latter, we could not hesitate to refer it to the earliest period of Isaiah's ministry — the reign of Jotham,—which every other part of the discourse suits perfectly. If the former, it must have been delivered in the reign of Ahaz, before he shut up the temple; or during the Assyrian invasion in the time of Hezekiah: and the earlier date would be preferable, as less opposed to the position in which we find the prophecy, though it is not, as some commentators suppose, fixed by the mention of idolatry in verses 29, 30, 31., for we see from chapters xxx. 22., xxxi. 7., that this still co-existed with the worship of the true God, in the reign of Hezekiah, as it had in those of his predecessors. The doubt cannot be decided by the mere grammatical construction of the sentence as it could be in English, since the Hebrew prophets habitually use the liberty which their language permits, of speaking of future events in the present or even past tense. Thus the description of the invading army in chap. v. 26., is in the *past* tense in the Hebrew; 'but this,' says Rosenmüller, 'is no reason for doubting that Isaiah is speaking of the future; for in prophecy the past or present tense is used instead of the future, in order that future events may be contemplated as if present, and may the more strongly stir the mind of the hearer, when they are set before his eyes by the very form of the discourse.' But the question is, whether, in this particular place, the expressions are those of the poet and prophet picturing the scene as it rises in vision before his imagination, or whether there be something so matter-of-fact in them that they must be taken to describe the horrors of actual invasion, visible at the very time to the bodily eyes of Isaiah and his hearers. There are learned authorities on each side, and they have been marshalled in a special treatise by

* Kimchi in Gesenius.

Caspari, who decides in favour of the earlier date. If I could perceive the supposed difference between this and the ordinary prophetic style, I should (unless that difference made it impossible) still be decided by the external fact—the actual position of the discourse—to adopt the same conclusion. But while I recognise the thoroughly life-like character of the picture, I cannot see that it is more life-like than many which no one denies Isaiah to have drawn in imagination; nor (if I must argue the *à priori* point too) can I admit that Isaiah could have been a master of his art, if his imaginative creations could be thus positively distinguished from statements of fact. I shall have occasion to return to this subject of prophecy, considered as a real and intelligible product of the intellectual faculties: here I will observe that I believe the present is only the first instance—and we shall reach the last, but in the last chapter—of that want of thorough apprehension of the phenomenon of prophecy, which is at the bottom of many serious critical errors of the most opposite kinds. The subject is indeed becoming clearer every day; and the most sceptical commentators have abandoned the notion that no prophecy can be rationally explained except as a description after the event. And if I sit in judgment on much more learned men than myself, when I thus say that the present difficulty exists only in their own minds, it is not without being well aware that but for them I could never have acquired any insight into the subject which I may now be turning against them.

Though we do not adopt Vitringa's date (in the reign of Ahaz), we must still agree with him that this discourse is fitly placed here as being the most general in its argument and application, as well as remarkable for its finished and elegant structure, apparently modelled after that great vision of the nation's destinies, the Song of Moses. And, perhaps, this finished and elegant structure may be taken with some propriety as itself an indication of the early date of the composition. It is the attribute of youth, and especially of youthful genius, to embody its newly-budding thoughts and feelings in ideals of microcosmic beauty and completeness: but by-and-bye the growing and expanding mind finds these ideals of its own creation too narrow to express the whole truth of things, and

abandons them for the larger, though severally less complete, forms, which the various realities of the actual world supply, and then seeks to find in these a new and better ideal, large as the world itself; — an ideal which is revealed to, rather than created by, the human mind; and the source of which, if we will go so far back, we must look for in that which the Athenian philosophers called the eternal truth and beauty of the divine mind, and Hebrew sages the things of the kingdom of God. That the marks of such a first youthful ideal are here conclusively present I do not venture to assert positively, but rather leave the point to the feeling and judgment of the reader; but certainly this short chapter may be taken as a very complete summary and specimen of the chief characteristics — moral, political, religious, poetical — of the whole book; and we may find in it the germs of almost all the great principles which Isaiah announced and applied to practice during the whole period that he exercised the prophetic office.

Bishop Lowth has the honour of discovering that the prophets wrote in the same ‘verse, measure, or rhythm,’ as the Hebrew poets properly so called; and we could hardly have a better illustration of the fact than in the chapter before us. The rhythm of thoughts and images which in Hebrew poetry takes the place of the rhythm of syllables and sounds, and enables it alone to be translated into other languages, may here be studied in its several forms: — line answering to line, and word to word; each bringing out the depth and force of the other, sometimes by variation, sometimes by opposition, sometimes by accumulation, of the corresponding or contrasted thoughts; no thought so like the other as to occasion sameness, nor so unlike as to make a discord; no formal adherence to any one rule of parallelism, but a free movement in which the poet’s inward sense of beauty and order supersedes all formal rules; and a blending and fusing of the several parts into a harmony which, with its variety in unity, produces a fulness not attainable in any other way.

Thus in the first paragraph: —

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth;
For the LORD hath spoken.

I have nourished and brought up children,
 And they have rebelled against me.
 The ox knoweth his owner,
 And the ass his master's crib :
 But Israel doth not know,
 My people doth not consider.

In the first line 'heavens' is set against 'earth,' and both united in rhythmical opposition to 'the LORD,' the inanimate creation to the living God; while 'hear' and 'give ear' in like manner correspond with each other and with 'spoken.' Then the next six lines are intertwined in a noticeable manner; for not only is there the double correspondence and double contrast of the four last lines among themselves, but the two preceding ones (which also balance each other) indirectly involve and anticipate the images of the four that follow: — 'I' and 'me' corresponding and contrasting with 'owner' and 'master,' 'nourisher' with 'crib,' and 'brought up' again with 'owner,' and 'children' with 'ox' and 'ass;' and the rebellion of the former with the obedience of the latter: and the thoughts are again repeated with a variation and summed up in the two last lines. And, finally, those two lines, with that taste and judgment with which every true poet (and none more than Isaiah) keeps down his imagination, and subordinates the parts of his diction to the whole, turn back the mind from images to realities, bringing before it the very people of Israel and their sin.

Verses 18, 19, 20. supply us with another instance of very beautiful rhythmical construction: —

Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD :
 Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow ;
 Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool :
 If ye be willing and obedient,
 Ye shall feed on the good of the land ;
 But if ye refuse and rebel,
 The sword shall feed on you :
 For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

First the single introductory line; then two, corresponding as to the lines (yet with the artistic variation in the relative posi-

tions of 'white' and the answering 'red'), but with the parts of each line contrasting between themselves; then four lines, in which the balance is between the alternate lines, with a contrast of word for word in the first and third, and a play and contrast of words and images (which call up, as in a background, the whole picture both of rural plenty and foreign invasion) in the second and fourth lines; and then the single line brings the period to a full close, while it answers to its first line. How elaborately these lines must have been constructed! What a delicately cultivated and refined sense of beauty in the least as well as the greatest matters of the poet's art do they evince! And in this, as in every part of the rhythmic art displayed by Isaiah, there is a *soul* of poetry inhabiting and expressing itself through this beautiful form.

Yet we must repeat, that the prophet — that Isaiah — is not a poet, but a preacher or orator; his aim is not to delight, but to teach and persuade men: he is not content that his hearers should unconsciously receive into their hearts the seeds of truth and goodness in the form of beauty, there to take root and grow up, night and day, one knows not how; but he labours to impart these by direct indoctrination in all its moral methods of reproof, warning, consolation, and instruction. There may be no exaggeration in the assertion that Isaiah possessed poetic genius of the highest order, and had cultivated it with the utmost care; but it is his servant not his master, and he, the patriot and the man of God, habitually employs it for the purposes of his own proper vocation. Ewald carries out this distinction by printing his translation as prose, observing that, though there is no doubt that the form of the original is as strictly rhythmical as in the poetical books, there are traces in the Hebrew text of these, and none in that of the prophets, that they were originally written verse-wise; and that the half-poetical style of the Arabs is always written as prose. There is, however, a composite style in Arabic, as in Persian and Sanskrit, in which prose and verse are interchanged at the writer's discretion, in the form in which Lowth prints Chapter vi., and which seems to me to supply a nearer parallel. But if we consider that the Hebrew language retained to the last its primitive simplicity of construction, and never acquired

those complex developments of grammar which have fitted the classical and modern tongues for elaborate prose composition; and that for this reason, as well as because Hebrew verse was a rhythm of sense rather than of sound, the main distinction between it and prose must always have been in the tone of thought; — we shall find a truer illustration in the rhythmical oratory of the Greeks at a period when their political culture, indeed, was at a much less advanced stage than that of the Jews in the time of Isaiah, but that of the two languages, as instruments of thought, apparently not so unequal. ‘We must recollect,’ says Mr. Grote, of this early rhythmical discourse, ‘that this was not only the whole poetry, but the whole literature of the age: . . . and writing, if beginning to be employed as an aid to a few superior men, was at any rate generally unused, and found no reading public. The voice was the only communicant, and the ear the only recipient, of all those ideas and feelings which productive minds in the community found themselves impelled to pour out; both voice and ear being accustomed to a musical recitation or chant, apparently something between song and speech, with simple rhythm, and a still simpler occasional accompaniment from the primitive four-stringed harp.’ And again, — ‘Kallinus . . . employed the elegiac metre for exhortations of warlike patriotism; and the more ample remains which we possess of Tyrtæus are sermons in the same strain, preaching to the Spartans bravery against the foe, and unanimity as well as obedience to the law at home. They are patriotic effusions, called forth by the circumstances of the time, and sung by single voice, with accompaniment of the flute, to those in whose bosoms the flame of courage was to be kindled. For though what we peruse is verse, we are still in the tide of real and present life, and we must suppose ourselves rather listening to an orator addressing the citizens, when danger or dissension is actually impending.’* The modern Italian improvisatore, too, can utter verse extempore; and such was the rhythm of Grattan’s first speech in the English House of Commons, that we are told (in Lord Holland’s *Memoirs*) that ‘Mr. Pitt beat time to the artificial but harmonious cadence of his periods.’ Even in the actual utterance of their

* *History of Greece*, vol. iv. pp. 100. 110.

discourses the Hebrew prophets must have come very near the rhythmical form of their written works : and with whatever mixture of simple or even rude prose we suppose them to have spoken, we see that they afterwards recorded the substance of their discourses in literary compositions, which for their careful editing may be better compared with Burke's pamphlets, than with his merely reported speeches ; while their eminently poetical thoughts and imagery, as well as diction, may remind us of the free blank verse in which Shakspeare idealises spoken discourse, as contrasted with the more restricted movement of Milton or Spenser. And, therefore, as in all translations something of the original must be given up for the sake of what we keep, I incline to think that the rhythmical printing of Lowth and the Paragraph Bible may better represent the original to an English reader than that adopted by Ewald.*

Let us turn to the matter of the prophecy.

The heavens and earth are constant to the constitution and laws imposed on them by their Creator, and to them does God appeal against a nation who have ceased to believe in any moral

* The following passage is to the purpose, whether it supports me or no : " My pamphlet . . . was composed as for an oration before an assembly, and flowed straight from my heart, and hence it must be read like a speech. Any one who should read it to himself, or aloud, without modulating his voice, in a uniform tone, like a treatise that is merely concerned with ideas, would probably be as much puzzled with it as the ordinary reader is with Greek orations . . . particularly those in Thucydides, before he has learnt to read with the ear. . . . Most of our authors do not in the least know and consider, that the old prose writers wrote as if they were speaking to an audience ; whilst among us, prose is invariably written for the eye alone, at least only for the ear in the case of an easy narrative. This is why my style is found so strange and unusual, and hence punctuation is so difficult to me, for I ought to have many more signs in order to indicate my exact intentions. In fact, with all that the writer composes as if he were speaking, the character of the movement, and the time, ought to be marked, as in music, for the ordinary reader." — *Niebuhr's Life and Letters*, vol. i. I suspect this is the key to the music of our authorised English Bible and Prayer Book. It also throws light on the elaborate Masoretic accentuation, which has undertaken to mark the tone not only of words, but of propositions, and so to preserve 'the sense of the thought, the internal life of the sentence,' in a dead language. See *Ewald's Hebrew Grammar*, trans. by Nicholson, § 180. ff.

order or government of the world* : the dullest animals show an attachment to their owner's person, and a recognition of his manner of caring for them, though he keeps them only for his own profit; but this people disregard and set at nought their filial relation to the LORD, though he has chosen them out from all mankind to be his own children, bestowed on them the peculiar care and love of a father, and by a long education qualified them to understand as well as to enjoy the blessings of this adoption. They have made themselves like those beasts of burden, loading themselves with their iniquities; so degenerated are they from their true birthright, that they seem to be evil in their very stock and breed, like the Canaanites and other accursed races †; —

They have forsaken the LORD,
They have despised the Holy One of Israel,
They are gone away backward.

* Lowth here quotes Psalm l. 3, 4., Micah, vi. 1, 2., Deut. xxxii. 1., and Deut. xxx. 19.; and Gesenius Virgil's

‘Esto nunc sol testis, et hæc mihi Terra vocanti,’ &c. — *Æn.* xii. 176.
To which may be added the appeal of Prometheus, —

ὦ Διὸς αἰθῆρ, καὶ ταχύπτεροι πνοαί,
ποταμῶν τε πηγαί, ποντίων τε κυμάτων
ἀνῆριθμον γέλασμα, παμμῆτορ τε γῆ,
καὶ τὸν πανόπτην κύκλον ἡλίου καλῶ.

Æsch. Prom. Vinc. 88.

And Hamlet's —

‘O all ye host of heaven, O earth!’

All are founded on the same intuitive feeling of the mind, that the works and powers of outward nature are an abiding witness for a settled constitution and order in the universe, however overlooked or defied. So Wordsworth, in his *Ode to Duty*, —

‘Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,

And the most ancient heavens through thee are fresh and strong.’

Contrast, too, the pantheistic confusion in the language of the classical parallels, with the clear distinction between the world and its Maker, which is so clear to the Jew, that he does not so much assert as assume it as an axiom impossible to doubt.

† Ethnology, while it adds daily to its proofs of the descent of mankind from a single stock, also shows clearly the existence of degenerate races, which have long lost even the capacity for the nobler human qualities, religious, political, and intellectual. Whether it be lost beyond redemption is a problem which, in each case, has to be solved by Christianity. No other power even attempts the task. See further, on chapter xiv. 28.

Therefore punishment comes upon the sinful nation, and punishment severe and repeated enough to rouse it from its obstinate rebellion: as it is become thoroughly diseased at heart, it shall suffer outwardly in proportion to its inward insensibility; as there is no soundness, and no desire for soundness within, so shall it sink under the repeated strokes of a foreign invasion which adds fresh wounds to sores already festering, while it longs in vain for a deliverer and a healer. The vision of that woe rises before the prophet's eyes, and he sees all the national fruits of the long and vigorous reigns of Uzziah and Jotham swept away. Uzziah had effectually humbled that old and troublesome enemy of Judah, the Philistines, dismantling their fortified cities, and establishing his own garrisons in their territory: on the opposite side he had reduced the Ammonites to their proper condition of tributaries, from which they had never lost any opportunity of revolting since David conquered them: he had recovered the port of Elath on the Red Sea, rebuilt it, and thus, after an interval of about eighty years, restored to Judah an important share in the commerce of the world: and he had strongly fortified Jerusalem, and organised a well armed and disciplined militia, 'that went out to war by bands,' that so the people might not be taken from the cultivation of the land, and other peaceful occupations, except in regular turns. And while by these means 'his name spread abroad, even to the entering in of Egypt, for he strengthened himself exceedingly,' he was no less active in availing himself of the profound peace he had secured abroad to encourage commerce and agriculture at home; he himself setting an example in the latter which his nobles were not slow to follow: 'he built towers' for the protection of his flocks 'in the desert' or commons where they pastured, 'and digged many wells; for he had much cattle, both in the low country and in the plains; husbandmen also, and vinedressers in the mountains and in Carmel; for he loved husbandry:' the reopening of the port of Elath would not merely have enabled his merchant-ships to supply Judah and Jerusalem with the luxuries of Africa and India, but would have made Judæa the direct natural highway of much of the traffic between those countries and Europe, which the Phœnicians carried on by help of trade-caravans,

and which would previously have taken a different route; and while trade and agriculture thus filled the land with wealth, Egypt supplied them with horses and chariots: and what the reign of Uzziah had begun, that of Jotham, at the end of half a century, was still carrying on. And now the prophet beholds all overthrown, the cities burned, the cultivated fields and the pastures laid waste, and the whole land devoured, plundered, and 'turned upside down, as is the way in foreign invasions'*, while the inhabitants look on, unable to resist, and Jerusalem itself, the only remaining hope, is threatened with siege. Then, by one of those transitions and combinations with which the imagination can throw a gleam of light and beauty over the darkest and most terrific picture, and yet at the same time even heighten its truth and force, the wasted fields seem to the prophet like the vineyards and cucumber gardens at the end of the fruit season, when they are indeed stripped and trampled, and desolate-looking, yet only because the crops have been gathered in for the benefit of the husbandman: and the sole surviving capital stands there apparently abandoned by its divine watcher and keeper, like the temporary shed which sheltered the keeper of the vineyard or garden as long as its fruits could tempt the jackal and the fox, and was then left as useless,—yet, inasmuch as it is 'like a besieged city,' it is garrisoned as well as beleaguered, and hope remains within, though desolation is without. And then the thoughts and images of selfish prosperity and general calamity, of national sins and divine judgments, but of a small remnant saved through and out of all, assume another form, and recall the ancient fate of those cities which were destroyed because the LORD could not find ten righteous men therein:—

Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a small remnant

We should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

* Grotius quotes—

“Impius hæc tam culta novalia miles habebit?

Barbarus has segetes?”—*Virg. Ec. i.* 71, 72.

“England is become the residence of foreigners and the property of strangers: at the present time there is no Englishman either earl, bishop, or abbot: strangers all, they prey upon the riches and vitals of England; nor is there any hope of a termination of this misery.”—*William of Malmesbury*, ii. 13.

The LORD of hosts, or of armies, is a favourite expression of the Hebrew writers, and especially of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Malachi, by which they recognise Him as the universal governor of heaven and earth, 'who has ordained and constituted the services of men and angels in a wonderful order : ' —

‘ His state

Is kingly ; thousands at his bidding speed

And post o'er land and ocean without rest ;

They also serve who only stand and wait : ' —

and who employs His kingly and almighty power to rule the nations in righteousness, and, as now, both to punish and to save His chosen people. Nor need we be deterred by grammarians from discovering a like depth and beauty of meaning in the phrase just before — ‘ the Daughter of Zion,’ or doubt that to the mind of the prophet and his thoughtful hearers it called up the idea of the nation having been brought up by, set apart for, and by formal covenant united to, the LORD; called His bride; and appointed to show forth, in the constitution, and order, and duties, of national society and political life, a new and wider manifestation of those laws of God's relation with, and government of, man, of which marriage was the first type: while the name of Zion would remind them of a city founded upon a rock, and that could not be moved — set upon a hill, and that could not be hid.

The sin of Sodom is said (Ezekiel, xvi. 49.) to have been pride, fulness of bread, abundance of idleness, and contempt of the poor and needy; their land was one of peculiar fertility, and they had given themselves up to a mere life of nature, till they wallowed in all the worst sins that break out from such a life. National institutions are the proper means of preserving a people from, or raising them out of naturalism; but the prophet protests that his countrymen were sunk in it, notwithstanding their national polity, and their strict maintenance of its forms. Though the blasted and submerged site of the cities of old was a perpetual witness to the Jews of God's wrath against this sensualism — a witness abiding from generation to generation in the very midst of them — yet they were as reckless of God's meaning in this thing as the Italians always seem

to have been regarding the like destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii.

The prophet kindling at the thought of his own comparison, and feeling how just a one it is, calls on those men — rulers and people — who, though professing to administer and obey the law of the LORD, were in heart no better than the men of Sodom and Gomorrah, to hear what the law of the LORD is in spirit and in truth. They still maintain all the external forms of religion according to the established ecclesiastical ritual, but no inward faith quickens them. This has ever been the great abuse of religious forms in all nations and times. Forms there must be; they are a real, vital, part of religion, as the body is a real part of the man: but when they lose their life they become as worthless and corrupt as a *dead* body. To preserve this life is the difficult task: it must be fed direct from heaven through a channel which can only be kept open as long, and as far, as man consents that his spirit should be raised above the routine of nature and the world. And this elevation is so irksome to our nature, it is so much pleasanter that morality and religion should go on, like digestion, by the unconscious working of a mechanical organisation, that men are always yielding to the delusion that the thing can be accomplished, — from the African or the Buddhist, who multiply their prayers by help of a rotary calibash or drum, to the priest of Rome, who ‘makes God’ with robings, and genuflexions, and unintelligible utterances, and the elevation of a wafer, or the Protestant divine with his ‘Letter of Scripture,’ and his Articles which are to fasten truth, like an idol, ‘with nails so that it shall not be moved,’ and to establish a ‘doctrine and discipline from which he will not endure any varying or departing in the least degree.’ Therefore Isaiah protests in God’s name that the Law is not in the forms but in the meaning of them: sacrifices of bullocks and goats are worthless if they are not the symbols of an actual though inward sacrifice of that fleshly will which is separating the worshipper from God’s spiritual presence: the multitudes who throng the courts of the temple, and think they are keeping the command to ‘appear before the LORD,’ though their hearts are far away, are but treading that command under their feet (as the Hebrew word

implies): oblations which express no sincere thankfulness are vain: incense with which no prayer of the heart ascends is an abomination: sabbaths and feasts do but mock God when they are kept by men who are grinding the faces of the poor with unremitted and unrewarded work: the great yearly assemblies are worse than idle types of national brotherhood in the midst of universal and habitual oppression and misery. And such a national worship and obedience to the law as this, will obtain nothing from the LORD in the day of calamity: men may lift up their hands in prayer, but in vain, while those hands have been so long and deeply stained with blood; they must wash them thoroughly (still alluding to the ecclesiastical ritual), by ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well; they must

Seek justice, relieve the oppressed,

Right the fatherless, plead for the widow.

If they will so reform, and return to true obedience to their King and their God, He will himself wash them thoroughly from all their iniquity, though it be more deeply ingrained than the power of man can reach. The word which our Bible translates *reason*, means also *plead* or *argue* in a court of justice, as it does in Job, xxiii. 7., and Micah, vi. 2. The context shows that both ideas must be included; for while the whole tone of this prophecy is judicial, arraigning the unjust and iniquitous rulers of the Jewish nation before the judgment-seat of their invisible King, the reformation, which is the end of judgment, is never lost sight of, the fatherly character of the Judge is always present, and He *reasons* with the culprit, and is willing to be reasoned with. For He remembers His covenant, and is not a God of mere power and wrath, nay, not even of mere unbending law, but a living Lord of righteousness and love, resolved indeed to maintain absolutely and without infringement His own holiness, and justice, and truth, yet desiring that the most disobedient should still depart from his sin, and return and live again under His holy constitution and government, and enjoy the blessings of so doing, loving God, and knowing that God loves him: therefore, in the midst of all these threatenings, God appeals to the people themselves whether He is not *reasonable* in His conduct towards them. Thus

the word is at once expressive of the deepest truth and meaning, and in accordance with the actual practice of the Hebrew institutions, which preserved much of their patriarchal character, as all Eastern nations do to this day, even when most corrupt.

‘The faithful city is become a harlot’ :— Jerusalem, the daughter of Zion, the wife of the Holy One of Israel, has broken the bond of her covenant with Him, has set at nought the divine constitution and order in which He originally placed, and has continued to sustain, her : and, as the outward consequence and sign of this spiritual defection, has actually fallen to the worship of other Gods. Throughout this prophecy Isaiah dwells chiefly on the sins of the princes and rulers of the nation, and only incidentally on those of the people ; and accordingly, he now dilates on the characteristic vices of the former, which are the fruits of their national unfaithfulness. Social and political morality have vanished along with religious faith ; thieves and murderers are found instead of virtuous citizens* ; the nobles and men in authority are the first to break the laws they should enforce ; the administration of justice is so corrupt that the judges take bribes, connive at the robbers whose booty they share, and permit the rich man to pervert the law for the oppression of the fatherless and the widow, who have no patrons to demand, and no money to buy, justice : and thus the aristocracy, setting aside all belief that they hold their wealth and power in trust from God, for the benefit of the people under them, do but employ these as irresistible engines for breaking down all rights that can oppose them in their pursuit of luxury and vice. Therefore will the mighty LORD of the nation put forth his strength, and purge out these iniquities, destroying those who have defied and renounced Him, and by means of this severe discipline restoring the nation to its former and true character of a people faithful to God, and dealing uprightly with each other. ‘Zion shall be redeemed,’ through this execution of judgment, and her restored and reformed children shall dwell within her walls in righteousness. ‘Converts’ is a cognate word to that in chapter x. 21.

It may be asked, At what former period of Jewish history

* The word ‘lodging’ is suggested by the image of a populous city ; ‘silver’ by its wealth ; ‘wine’ by its luxury.

did the nation deserve that character for faith and righteousness which Isaiah ascribes to it 'at the beginning?' and at what subsequent time was it restored to the condition which he promises 'afterwards?' I must reply,—not by pointing back to the days of Moses or Samuel, or David, or Solomon, nor forward to those of Hezekiah, Josiah, or the Maccabees; for it could be shown that the men who lived at each of those times were ready to cry out against their special corruption,—but by reference to that universal habit of men's minds to suppose a past and hope for a future, realisation in actual life, of their ideals of human perfection. Few men, in any time or country, have that power of metaphysical abstraction which can enable them to contemplate ideals as such; and even they, when they descend to practical life, and the practical instruction of the men around them, find it necessary to translate their ideas into the popular language. The oppressed Saxon prayed for the restoration, by his Norman tyrant, of the laws of Edward, though it would have been difficult for him to prove the personal merits of that king as a legislator or ruler; the Long Parliament based all its demands on the ancient rights of the Commons; the French and English Republicans of the last century referred to an original social contract; and in our own day the Church of the first centuries and the chivalry of the middle ages, supply to considerable classes a local habitation and name for their ideals of life, though it would not be easily shown that there ever was an adequate historical realisation of any one of them. We all feel indeed that there is a fact no less than a truth recognised in such language, both as to the past and the future. There is a continual progress in the world, and every step of it is gained by the triumph of some good over some evil, and consequently by some realisation in fact of what, till it had so triumphed, could only assert itself in idea. Thus the new is always the restoration of the old, and the old the promise of the new, and the whole ideal of time is in light, though the particular moment as it passes is marked by shadow. It will become increasingly apparent as we go on, how important an element of the prophetic character and office this belief and promise of the realisation of a perfect commonwealth was, and in what relation it stands to the search or longing for such a

society by the philosophers and philanthropists of other nations and times.

But to return to the detail of the text before us. In the judgments and the restoration which the prophet foretells, he declares that the people shall learn the worthlessness of the idols which they have been worshipping under the oak trees, and in the sacred groves. The worship of the 'high places' seems to have been partly an adoption of the actual idolatry of the neighbouring nations, and partly (2 Chron. xxxiii. 17.) a remains of that local worship of the true God, which in some of its forms at least (for the obscurity of the subject has been already noticed) seems to have become irregular and blameable when one central sanctuary had been established for the whole people: experience proved that neither pure faith and worship, nor national unity, could be preserved but by the paramount—perhaps the sole—recognition of that sanctuary as the one house and altar of God; and when they fell away from this, their religion became a religion of nature and not of faith, of isolated individuals and not of a church. That this false worship was going on in Judæa during the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, at the same time with the temple services, appears from 2 Kings, xv. 3, 4., compared with 2 Chron. xxvii. 2.* In that day the prophet foretells that these men who have been flourishing in their sin, like the oaks, and living in pleasures like those of a well-watered garden, shall find that their idols have no power to save them from a destruction which shall make them 'as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water,'—images which will be the more forcible if we remember that in a southern climate, trees fade rather from excessive heat than from seasonable cold, and a garden without water is a mere desert of sand. Then shall the strong, the mighty, and the unjust ruler become tow, and his idols, the work of his hands, a spark; they shall both burn together, and no man shall quench them.

In verse 29, is an instance of what seemed to Lowth's classical taste a corrupt reading: '*They* shall be ashamed of the oaks which *ye* have desired.' But this variation of the persons of

* For allusions to the subject at other times, see Deut. xvi. 21., 1 Kings, xiv. 23., 2 Kings, xvi. 4., 2 Chron. xxviii. 4., Ezekiel, vi. 13.

the verb is not unusual in Hebrew, and certainly no corruption. Nay if we look at Psalm xci., which is very artistically constructed, we shall see reason to think that what jars so harshly on a classically trained ear was a beauty to the Hebrew poets. I dwell the more upon these peculiarities of idiom and composition, because I believe that we cannot understand the higher and deeper meaning of Isaiah, any more than we can of Shakspeare, unless our minds are emancipated from servile adherence to classical rules. Each language and literature has its own laws, and these are derived from and connected with a distinctive national mind, which expresses itself in its own way through the great writers of each nation: and thus language becomes a key to national character.

CHAPTER III.

ISAIAH, II. III. IV.—HEBREW GENIUS IMAGINATIVE RATHER THAN LOGICAL.—PRETERITE AND FUTURE TENSES IN HEBREW.—THE LAST DAYS.—CONTRAST OF THE IDEAL AND ACTUAL STATE OF THE NATION.—FOREIGN INFLUENCES.—PRIVATE IDOLATRY.—POLITICAL MATERIALISM.—NATIONAL DECAY.—LAWS OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD.—GOOD AND EVIL OF COMMERCE.—HEBREW MATRONS.—FEMALE LUXURY—ITS PUNISHMENT.—THE BRANCH OF THE LORD.—THE RESTORED THOUGH HUMBLLED NATION.

THE next discourse, consisting of chapters ii. iii. iv., is entitled, 'The Word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.' The propriety of applying the phrase 'saw' to '*the Word*' is apparent, if we refer ourselves to the mental process which takes place in meditating upon any important truth, especially while the vividness of the first discovery lasts; and still more is it obvious, as we read the discourse itself, and look for ourselves at its various pictures of military power, maritime commerce, wealth, luxury, pride, selfishness, and irreligion.

No arguments need be added to prove that the prophecy depicts the state of society in the period between the latter end of the reign of Uzziah, and the beginning of that of Ahaz.

The opening paragraph—a passage of aphoristic completeness and beauty, and here serving as a text to the subsequent discourse—is found also, with a few verbal alterations, in Isaiah's cotemporary, Micah (chap. iv. 1—3.). Conjecture has variously attributed it to each of these prophets, and to some older one, copied by both: the last seems the most probable supposition.

If we keep the verbs in the tenses which they have in the Hebrew, the passage will stand thus:—

And it *hath come to pass* in the last days,
That the mountain of the LORD's house *shall be* established at the
head of the mountains,

And exalted above the hills;
 And all nations *have* flowed unto it.
 And many peoples *have* gone and said,
 Come ye, and we will go up to the mountain of the LORD,
 To the house of the God of Jacob;
 And He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths:
 For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
 And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
 And he *hath* judged between the nations,
 And *hath* arbitrated for many peoples:
 And they *have* beat their swords into ploughshares,
 And their spears into pruninghooks:
 Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
 Neither shall they learn war any more.

This—at first sight and to our notions—singular use of the tenses is thoroughly discussed by the grammarians; yet in their translations even Gesenius and Ewald obliterate all traces of it, usually substituting the present for both past and future. If the German idiom peremptorily requires this, Professor Alexander has shown, in his notes on the latter chapters of Isaiah, that no such entire sacrifice is demanded by the English; but that very frequently an adherence to the original distinction of tenses gives a beauty as well as force to the passage, which leaves little doubt that we shall one day see it naturalized to a great extent in our English Bibles. The explanation of the Hebrew usage, in as far as this is the place for considering it, is clearly that the structure of such a passage as that before us is imaginative, not logical—a picture, not a statement. The speaker completely projects himself into ‘the last days;’ he *is* there, he finds them come; he looks about him to see what is actually in process, and sees that the mountain of the Lord’s house is about to be—still in process of being—established at the head of the mountains; he looks again, and the nations have already arrived at the place prepared for them, yet so freshly that they are still calling one another on; and as they come up they find that the King they seek is already there, and has effected some of his arbitrations and decisions before they arrive for their turn.

So thoroughly does this imaginativeness pervade the language not only of the prophets but of the historians, so habitually has

the imaginative and not (as with us) the logical faculty dictated the laws of Hebrew grammar, that the form 'and it hath come to pass' in the first line, 'refers always to a future event;' while that of 'shall be' in the second, is usually equivalent to the ἐγένετο of historical narration.* There seems indeed a special idiom as to this verb: and the subject is still more clearly explained in the general rule 'that in continued narrations of the past, only the first verb stands in the preterite, the others being in the future form; and on the contrary, in continued descriptions of the future, the first verb is in the future, while the rest are in the preterite form. Thus in Genesis i. 1.: — *In the beginning God created (pret.) the heavens and the earth: And God will say (fut.) 'Let there be light, and there will be (fut.) light: And God will see, &c.* And just the reverse in Isaiah vii. 17. ff.: — *Jehovah will bring (fut.) upon thee and upon thy people, days such as have not come since, &c. And it hath (pret.) happened on that day . . . And they have (pret.) come.'*† In both these examples the speaker evidently places himself in the midst of the events themselves, describing the past creation as it would have been seen by that eye that 'was there or ever the earth was, while as yet He had not made the land nor the fields'‡, and picturing the future as Ahaz would realise it after it had become the past.

Nor is it only in the Hebrew language and its grammar, that this characteristic appears: it pervades the whole genius of the nation, the structure and growth of their laws and institutions, and the acts and habits of their legislators and statesmen, as well as the writings of their poets and historians: they are 'of imagination all compact;' a very 'nation of prophets;' the future is their goal, and their appointed rest, to which they press forward as travellers through the mere actual and present. It may be difficult for an Englishman, or German, in our nineteenth century, to realise this state and habit of mind; but it is a difficulty somewhat analogous to that which we find in realising the state of mind which produced the Greek mytho-

* Gesenius, *Lexicon*, word הָיָה.

† Gesenius, *Grammar*, § 48 b. English edition of Bagster, 1852.

‡ Proverbs, viii. 22—30. The whole passage bears on this point in a noticeable manner.

logy *, and which also, in another way, was so highly imaginative, that in the present stage of the human race, and the now predominating development of the reasoning faculties, we have no corresponding inward experience. Yet the faculty of imagination still exists in us; and if we carefully study its character and workings in our own minds, and in the writings of the poets of our own, and of other times; if we meditate upon the distinctive features of the Hebrew mind, literature, language, and institutions, in their action and reaction upon each other, and as they correspond with, or differ from those of other nations; if we consider that there is a growth (with its consequent losses as well as gains) of the human race, no less than of its several families and individual men †; if, lastly, we believe that

* “ But how can we arrive at an idea of its (the Mythus) real nature and import? Such an idea cannot be attained *à priori*, as we have it only from experience; neither is it immediately, and of itself, intelligible, being utterly unknown as a product of our times. It is a purely historical idea; an idea, moreover, by which a creation of very remote times is to be conceived. It cannot possibly be arrived at otherwise than historically. But how is its historical perception possible, the mythus itself being the only source of the idea of the mythus, and appearing, too, in a form different from its contents? In the statement of an historical fact the form and the contents correspond; an acquaintance with the language forms the bridge which leads from one to the other. But *here* they lie further apart, and the path must first be sought, is itself a problem. In other words, mythi must be interpreted, must be explained, ere we can attain a knowledge of their contents. This must be done in a thousand individual instances ere we shall be able to seize the essence of the mythus as a generic idea. And then the question still remains, whether we can express the knowledge thus attained by an idea such as passes current amongst us, or by a simple combination of such ideas; whether we do not find something compounded, according to our notions, of multifarious, widely separated, and heterogeneous materials, the union of which is based on a mode of thinking entirely different from ours.” *Müller’s Scientific Mythology*, translated by Leitch, p. 6.

† Mythology has supplied us with one instance, Language furnishes another. “It may be observed as a general fact,” says Dr. Pritchard, “that Languages appear to have become more permanent as we come down towards later times. During the last ten, or perhaps the last fifteen centuries, they have undergone few alterations except through the effect of conquest, or the intermixture of nations. The Bretons . . . are still easily intelligible to the natives of Wales. . . . The Scots who emigrated from the north of Ireland to Argyleshire . . . can still converse with the natives of Ireland. Languages, by intermixture of nations, become disintegrated; they lose part

these characteristics of the Hebrew mind were providentially so heightened, adapted, and directed by the influence of political institutions, and local and historical circumstances, as that men chosen out of this nation might, without any violent, arbitrary, or in any way monstrous, subversion of their human nature and faculties, be made the fit instruments of God's revelation of Himself to men:—then we shall perhaps find that there is a rational and intelligible idea of prophecy attainable by us; and that in proportion as we realise it, it will make clear the dark and difficult places in the prophetic Scriptures, and deliver us from the fear of having to choose between interpretations fairly obnoxious to the charge of introducing the doctrines of superstition, and even magic, into religion, and those of a sceptical criticism, which is often as regardless of historical and literal fact as of true philosophy and Christian faith.

Isaiah then, 'rapt into future times,' sees the throne of the LORD of Israel established in sovereignty over all the nations of the earth, and they becoming willing subjects to Him, and friendly fellow citizens to each other. The nations attain to true liberty, for they come to submit themselves to the righteous laws and institutions, and to the wise and gracious word and direction, of that King whose service is perfect freedom; and to true brotherhood, for they leave their old enmities and conflicts, and make the same LORD their judge, and umpire, and reconciler. And all this, not by some newly invented device of the nations,

of their grammatical modifications. . . . In the mean time no new forms of human speech are produced: no new varieties of inflection expressive of the modification of ideas by changes in the endings or the initial syllables of words are ever attempted; particles and auxiliaries are inserted to supply the want of obsolete inflections. Formations of language and the development of grammatical systems have long ceased. As in geology, we now only witness the disintegration of what the first ages produced. How different was the habit of the human mind with regard to language in the age when the Sanskrit, the Greek, the Latin, and the Mæso-Gothic, idioms were developed from one common original!" — *Researches into the Physical Hist. of Mankind*, ii. 221, 222. The whole paragraph is most interesting, as showing man's original powers of language-making, and their gradual cessation.

The practice of sacrifice by all the nations of antiquity, with its abandonment by those of Christendom, as also by the Mahometans, is another of the changes in *kind*, and not merely in degree, of a large part of the human race. In such facts as these, the student of a constructive historical phi-

some new result of their own civilisation, but by the carrying out of the old original purpose and plan of God, that His chosen people of the Jews should be the ministers of these good things, and that in them should all nations of the earth be blessed,—that 'out of Zion should go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.' This is the vocation of the Hebrew people. This, says the prophet, is the key to all our duties as a nation, this is the master-light to guide us to right action:—'O house of Israel, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.'

The appeal is in vain. The house of Israel is, indeed, willing enough for, and is already practising, a universal brotherhood of nations, but quite of another fashion from this. They have filled themselves to repletion with the idolatries and divinations of the Syrians, Chaldeans, and Philistines; and on every side have joined themselves to the heathens by marriages, political alliances, commercial intercourse, and adoption of religious rites. *Juventutem studiis externis degenerare*, was the complaint of the Romans who were still faithful to the ancient discipline, in the time of Nero*; and even in our own Christian times, and among Christian nations, these are great causes of national deterioration: and Moses and the prophets are proved by the result to have judged rightly, that nothing but the strict exclusion of such foreign influences could preserve the moral, political, and religious nationality of their country. I would urge the thoughtful consideration of these verses (2—9.) on any one who is perplexed by the confident assertion of writers who prefer vague declamation to close investigation and reasoning, that the Hebrew prophets were actuated by a bitter hatred of foreigners. He will, I think, discover (from this and such like study) that they were possessed by views and hopes of a philanthropy which even our own times have not been able to extend: they yearned for fellowship with all men, under the only conditions in which fellowship is possible: they longed for an universal communion of virtue, humanity, and goodness, and

losophy patiently seeks the key to many a difficulty in Jewish as well as other ancient history, which the merely destructive critic gets rid of by a reference to the standard of his own times and country.

* *Tacit. Ann.* xiv. 20. quoted by Vitringa.

could not be content to have a general licence of vice, brutality, and wickedness instead; and they advocated what they saw, and what all history has proved, to be the only way of avoiding the one and securing the other.

For the like reasons Moses had forbidden, and Isaiah here proceeds (no doubt with a reference to the law of Moses) to censure, the accumulation of wealth, and the multiplying horses and chariots. The nation had come to the state from which Moses would have kept it back if possible: it was rich, luxurious, and put its trust in the physical force of its standing army, and meanwhile had forgotten its divine King, and the covenant between them. And therefore the land had become 'full of idols.' It has been noticed that these were doubtless worshipped in many groves and high places during the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, though these kings formally upheld the national worship of the true God; but we may (with Vitringa) especially refer this passage to the *Teraphim*, the Penates or Lares 'which they made each one for himself to worship,' and to divine with, in their own houses;—a species of idolatry which from the earliest times is found among those who yet professed the worship of the LORD. The whole ecclesiastical scheme of the Hebrew polity tended to elevate the members of the nation out of a selfish state, and bring them to a consciousness of the dignity and virtue of being 'members one of another;' while the effect of this private superstition, which had filled the land with idols, must have been the exact contrary. So many gods, so many centres of social attraction and repulsion. A state of things in which every man has his own god in his own house, is mere naturalism, Shammanism, or Fetish-worship, and engenders the horde-life, into which family or patriarchal life sinks, if not comprehended in and upheld by national institutions, and especially a national worship. The bond of political society in Greece, or in Rome, was the *national* recognition of Apollo or Pallas, Jupiter or Mars. And if faith was thus potent as long as it remained sincere, though its objects were imaginary, not less was it necessary to the people whose God was the LORD. But since they have forsaken Him, in the office to which He had appointed them among the nations, the prophet declares that the LORD too hath forsaken them, and will not forgive them.

The LORD hath forsaken them as their father and friend, but He comes to call them to account as their judge. Men of every rank, high and low, have been humbling themselves everywhere before their idols; they shall now be compelled to bow down before the LORD, for all their haughtiness. The day of the LORD of Hosts is at hand; — that *crisis* or ‘day of judgment,’ in which He who upholds and directs the universe and its inhabitants by righteous laws and administration, executes on the impenitent breakers of those laws the sentence which He has pronounced against them. The Flood, the destruction of Sodom, the invasion of Judæa in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah, the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar or by Titus, and the like national *crises* in ancient and in modern history, are all ‘Days of the LORD,’ in which He comes to judge the earth; and partial anticipations of the last judgment of the world. Their wealth and rank shall not save them: though they tower above their fellows, as the cedars of Lebanon and the oaks of Basan (of which they build their palaces) tower above the common shrubs; though they stand like their native mountains, and like the fortifications which they have added to those mountains in defiance of all invaders; though they are prepared to resist the storms of fortune like the great merchant ships by which they have amassed their wealth, and though their dissolute idol-worship sanctions all the sensual luxury of their life*; yet all shall be brought down to the dust. They shall vainly seek to escape, as unarmed peasants or women fly into the nearest cave or hole when they hear the hoofs of some plundering tribe of Edom or Ishmael from the desert: but the judgment of the LORD shall reach them, as the earthquake (then, as now, not uncommon in Judæa) would bring down the rock on him who sought refuge in it. And as such fugitives carry in their hands their most precious goods, but are glad in their extremity to abandon these to the moles and bats of the caves, that they may more freely use their hands in clambering

* This seems the best explanation of ‘images of desire.’ Compare chapters i. 29., xlv. 9. with Genesis, iii. 6.; Levit. xxvi. 1.; Numb. xxxiii. 52. The phrase ‘ships of Tarshish’ (Tartessus in Spain), applied to merchant-ships which could only have traded in the south, is exactly like our usage of ‘China cups,’ ‘Japan trays,’ &c.

into the safest recesses, so the idolatrous nation shall be obliged to abandon its false gods. Such is man, when his trust is in idols, and when the LORD is not upholding, but opposing, him.

The prophet now proceeds to tell, in literal and detailed language, of the national calamities he has just before described metaphorically; and to declare the worthlessness of man's political devices to stay the ruin. At the time Isaiah spoke, the nation, and its capital city and seat of government, might seem to the worldly-wise too firmly established to fear the wrath, or need the help, of a God, whom they had forgotten as a dream among the realities of life. The fortified frontiers and the standing army might not have been tested for some time, but doubtless they were as invincible as in the days of the great Uzziah; and Judah's power was not merely in its army, but still more in its civilisation, in its system of laws, its religious and political culture, its statesmen versed in affairs, its feudal aristocracy, its ranks and dignities, its manufacturing skill and industry, and its eloquent oratory. How could such a state be in any danger? So argued the shrewd man of the world in Isaiah's day, just as he still does in our own. He could not see that the soldiers were a set of machines incapable of standing against an invasion of men full of fierce life; that the law was so administered as to be an engine of oppression instead of justice; that the prophets, the teachers of the people, employed their gifts and opportunities of teaching — just as the orators and advocates did theirs — to prove good to be evil and evil good, to justify prosperous wickedness, and to undermine all faith in moral and political righteousness. But Isaiah foresees that a slight irregularity in the working of this vast machinery of imposture will throw the whole into confusion. It may hold together for the life of the present king (though even his matured state-craft had no doubt done more than it could hope to do again), but the life and death of rulers are among the events which God retains in His own power; and when the weak and worthless boy Ahaz sits on the throne of his fathers — when God gives a child to be their prince and a babe to rule over them, it will be seen what their boasted order of society is worth.* The sovereign authority having fallen into powerless

* "Fire and slaughter raged on all sides. The country [Normandy during

hands, there will be nothing to restrain the strong man from exercising his pleasure against his weaker neighbour, and especially nothing to restrain the refuse of society from rising against the refined classes. Foreign invasion shall take advantage of this internal disorder, and the heads of tribes and families, the centres of Jewish political life, being killed, or carried into captivity, there will be a general dissolution of society; and when, under the sense of this calamity a man shall try and restore order and unity by calling on his elder brother — on whom devolve the rights and duties of the absent father — to take up his position as that father's representative, and to become a 'healer' of the 'ruin,' then will he refuse with the selfishness of despair, declaring that the ruin is too great to be repaired, and that he himself is too much sunk under it even to make the attempt.* How the men who heard these words of Isaiah experienced their truth a few years after, we learn from 2 Chron. xxviii., xxix. 6—9. Again were these judgments executed on a repetition of the offences in the reign of Manasseh; and again far more heavily in the days of Jeremiah, whose Prophecy and Lamentations describe the famine; the loss of all who could have given aid by vision, counsel, or the sword; the imbecility of the king, who dared not rule according to the dictates of his own conscience or judgment, but himself avowed that 'the king was not he who could do anything against' the people about him; the tyranny of the great men during these calamities; and the general depravity and dissolution of all moral and political order. If we compare the prophecy and history of the one period with those of the other, and both with like periods in the history of other nations (as, for instance, before the French or English Revolutions), we shall see clearly how the prophets announced the eternal and immutable *laws* of God's government of the world, to be again and again brought into operation, and accomplished, in the events of successive ages.

the minority of William the Conqueror], formerly most flourishing, was now torn with intestine broils, and divided at the pleasure of the plunderers; so that it was justly entitled to proclaim, 'Woe to the land whose sovereign is a child.'"—*William of Malmesbury*, iii.

* Compare the corresponding state of the kingdom of Samaria, at the period; Isaiah, ix. 17—20.; Hosea, vii. 1—7.

The prophet will not for a moment lose sight of the moral character of these national calamities; each fresh prediction of them is followed by the declaration that they are ‘the fruit of their doings,’ ‘the reward of their hands:’—

Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen,
Because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD,
To provoke the eyes of His glory;
The show of their countenance is against them;
And they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not.

The selfish aristocracy have abandoned all their proper—patriarchal and paternal—duties to their people, for the one business of wringing from them the means of unbounded luxury. This was a consequence of the commercial spirit entirely absorbing the aristocratic or patriarchal element which ought to have limited and purified it. Commerce is perhaps one of the most dangerous, as well as one of the most important, of national developments. Its good is as real as its evil; it is, in many obvious respects, a far better source and occasion for national and international activity than its only substitute, war: but the thoughtful student of history and politics does not need to be told that even war has sometimes proved more humanising than commerce; and still less, that the latter as certainly as the former turns to mere corruption and political degeneracy, if it be not duly balanced by other elements of national life.* And if modern philosophy is right in considering that each of the nations of antiquity was fitted to exhibit the separate working of one or two of the more elementary laws of politics, but not to afford a field for those vast and complicated

* “The philosophical thinkers on politics,” says Mr. Grote, “conceived (and to a great degree justly, as I shall show hereafter), that the conditions of security in the ancient world imposed upon the citizens generally the absolute necessity of keeping up a military spirit and willingness to brave at all times personal hardship and discomfort; so that increase of wealth, on account of the habits of self-indulgence which it commonly introduces, was regarded by them with more or less of disfavour.” — *History of Greece*, iii. 151. And again: — “There was a considerable body of ancient sentiment, and that, too, among high-minded and intelligent men, which regarded gold and silver as a cause of mischief and corruption, and of which the stanza of Horace (Od. iii. iii. 49.) is an echo—‘Aurum irrepertum,’ &c.” — *Ibid.* ix. 320.

problems which modern societies have to solve, then was Moses right in making laws to discourage the money-making spirit and practice of which the results would be such as Isaiah here denounces; results quite preclusive of the effectual development of that idea which it was the very end of the existence of the Hebrew polity to develope.

Connected with the grasping, money-loving spirit of the great and rich men, is that of pampered luxury in the women. The nobleman has substituted mere greedy blood-sucking with the forms of law for a kind paternal care and guidance of his dependants; and the lady has turned that feminine delicacy and gentleness which she should have employed in refining and humanising the relations of domestic life, and thence spreading its influence throughout society, into haughty exclusiveness and a love of dress and luxury, gradually degenerating to sensuality and licentiousness.

It always seems to me that Isaiah marks the fact of the social importance of the Hebrew women (which we otherwise know to have been so much more like that of the Roman than the Greek matron), and his own mournful though indignant sense of what high dignity and duty they had abandoned, in the prominence which he gives to the subject, by the elaborate description of the luxury of the daughters of Zion. How graphic he is! We see before us the Jewish ladies, 'walking and mincing as they go,' with haughtily tossed head, and wanton eyes, and hear the tinkling of the mimic fetters of gold with which their ankles are encircled: they wear the fine white linen of Egypt, and their long robes are rich with embroidery; the turban shows its wearer's taste, or the open network the beauty of her hair; the large veil, the ancient dress of the modest Hebrew woman of every rank, is now adjusted in the bold fashion of the day, or superseded by the lighter mantilla of lace or gauze thrown so gracefully over the head and shoulders; each fair face glistens with ear-drops and nose-jewels; from the chains about each slender neck hang the ornamental crescent, the amulet with its magical characters graven on the gem, the little mirror, or the scent-box; or we notice another capricious fashion, where a purse is fastened to the broad girdle of silk embroidered with gold, and the mirror is carried in a hand

loaded with bracelets and rings. We turn to look again, and the squalid filth and disease of poverty and the prison are before us:—

Instead of perfume there is stench ;
 And instead of a girdle, a rent ;
 And instead of well-set hair, baldness ;
 And instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth ;
 And branding instead of beauty.

The prophet seems to answer (in verse 25.) the incredulous question, How can this ever be; what danger is there of its befalling us? As though he had said, You are living in utter wordliness and selfishness, in the neglect of all relationships, and you shall feel what it is to be stripped of them all, by your husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers falling in battle;—that you may know what you are out of the order in which God has placed you, and which you have renounced. When your foreheads are scarred by the slave-master's brand, when your rich apparel has but insured its stripping by your ruthless captors, and when the sun beats on your heads, and you sink with hunger, thirst, weariness, and degradation, while driven naked and like herds of cattle in the train of the conquerors who have laid waste your homes,—then you shall know that it is the LORD who 'hath smitten the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and discovered their shame.'

Then he turns abruptly from the daughters, to the Daughter, of Zion, gathering them together in their proper representative, the licentious and rebellious nation, the faithless bride of the Holy One of Israel. He employs no arguments to prove the connection between the selfish luxury of the women and the decay of public virtue: their consciences cannot deny that their sin is both a cause and an effect of the national unrighteousness, and to their conscience he appeals direct, by simply announcing the impending judgment:—

Thy men shall fall by the sword,
 And thy mighty in the war:—*

and the gates of Jerusalem, the places of resort for business

* See further as to the treatment of captives in war, on Isaiah, xx.

or for pleasure, which now resound with the cheerful hum of prosperous throngs, shall echo with the voice of the bereaved, the destitute, or the captive, filling the air (as the manner of eastern nations was and is) with their wailings; and She, the widowed and childless City, shall sit upon the ground, as mourners used to sit, and as she was represented 800 years afterwards (and may still be seen), on the medals of her conquerors, Vespasian and Titus.

And in that day, when the youth of the land are everywhere cut off,

Seven women shall take hold of one man, saying,

We will eat our own bread,

And wear our own apparel;

Only let us be called by thy name,—

Take thou away our reproach.*

The Jewess, like the ancient Roman, or modern English, woman, was called by her husband's name; and she prized the honour of wedlock, and dreaded the reproach of childlessness, at least as much as either of these; but we must contrast the dignified expression of these feelings by Sarah, Hannah, and Elizabeth, nay, even that of the jealous and petulant Rachel, with the exhibition which the Prophet now contemplates in his mind's eye, in order to see the picture of social disorganisation which he sees. If a harem of wives and concubines was still a part of the king's state in Isaiah's time, though I know no reason for thinking it was, it is quite improbable that polygamy was the common custom of the nation, or that they had not long passed out of the half-civilised condition and habits for which Moses had provided, in his laws for the protection of the female slaves whom a man might take at the same time for his wives: but now Isaiah says that these women, whose luxury and pride he has just described, will abandon even the natural reserve of their sex, and not only force themselves several upon one man, but declare that they will be content to share with each other a legalised concubinage, in which they will not claim the con-

* Grotius quotes Lucan (*Pharsal.* ii. 342.):—

‘ . . . da tantum nomen inane
Connubii; liceat tumulo scripsisse, Catonis
Marcia.’

cubine's ancient right of bread and apparel, which the old law (Exod. xxi. 10.) had, in express terms, secured to her. It need not be supposed that Isaiah anticipated the literal fulfilment of his words; we shall probably understand him better by taking this as an instance of that poetic or rhetorical hyperbole, which he so delights to use for the more forcible expression of his moral and political teaching. The mystery which some commentators have seen in the numbers *seven* and *one* in this passage, and which is even said to have occasioned the separation of this portion of the prophecy into a distinct chapter, perhaps makes worth while the obvious remark, that it is nothing more than the wide-spread idiom of modern as well as ancient languages, by which a definite or round number is put for an indefinite. *Seven* is thus generally used by the Hebrews for any considerable number, as it was among the Egyptians and Persians, and is still said to be in the East. The Moguls are said to employ *nine* in like manner. So in English we put five, or ten, for any small, and a hundred for a large, number, in conversation; though the genius of our language forbids such idioms in graver discourse.

In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious,
And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely,
For them that are escaped of Israel.

Some commentators refer these words 'branch of the Lord,' and 'fruit of the earth,' merely to the restored and reformed nation, but there seems greater propriety in the explanation of those who see in 'the branch of the Lord' an allusion to more than this. I think that if we only contrasted the passage with such declarations as, —

'I will restore thy judges as at the first,
And thy counsellors as at the beginning :
Afterwards thou shalt be called,
The city of righteousness, the faithful city :
Zion shall be redeemed with judgment,
And her converts with righteousness' (chap. i., 26., 27.); —

or,

'The remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah,
Shall again take root downward,
And bear fruit upward' (chap. xxxvii. 31.); —

we might perhaps suspect some allusion to a personal deliverer and ruler in the one, which is wanting in the others: and we might find a probable explanation of this image of the branch, by comparing it with Isaiah's subsequent,—

‘There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots,’ &c. (chap. xi. 1.);—

with Jeremiah's—

‘Behold the days come, saith the LORD,
That I will raise unto David a righteous Branch,
And a king shall reign and prosper,
And shall execute justice and judgment, &c.’ (chap. xxiii. 5.);—

and with Zechariah's—

‘Behold the man whose name is the Branch :
And he shall grow up out of his place,
And he shall build the temple of the Lord,
And he shall bear the glory,’ &c. (chap. vi. 12.)

But we have a fuller, more philosophical light, to aid this verbal criticism. We find traces in all the earlier records of the Hebrew faith and history, of the expectation of an incarnate representative of the invisible LORD God of Israel; we see how it gradually becomes to Isaiah (as I hope the following pages will help to show at large), and to his cotemporaries and successors, the master-thought and light of their faith and teaching, to which they hold fast, though their individual anticipations of the manner of its fulfilment are again and again baffled, when the event shows that a Hezekiah, or Zerubbabel, or son of Josedeck, is *not* the Branch; and, lastly, we know when and how this expectation of Israel for themselves and mankind has been fulfilled in God's manner. And thus (if I may use the correct, though perhaps pedantic, phrase), we can explain the particular fact by the universal law, and recognise in the words before us an early dawning, in or to the mind of Isaiah himself, of the great idea of all prophecy.

Then follows the description of the restored and the reformed, though humbled and diminished, nation. It is a common observation, verified alike in great national calamities and in ordinary pauperism, that misery of itself tends to make men

more vicious; and accordingly it is not a mere judgment and execution on the bloody men and sensual women of Jerusalem that Isaiah foretells, but a moral purification of the nation, wrought by the LORD, and by his spirit, through these means. Their sin had alike infected their family and their political life; but now a new and holy spirit shall be revived in every household, and in the 'assemblies' of the citizens whether meeting at the temple worship or the preaching of a prophet*, at the ecclesiastical feasts or national fairs, at the tribunals of the king or the judges sitting in the gate, or on other occasions when they seem to have had a real (though according to modern European notions, irregular) voice in the legislation and government. God himself will bring about this restoration, showing Himself to be the present Lord of the nation, as He was when He led their fathers,—the 'tribes of Israel' and the 'congregation of the LORD,'—by the pillar of cloud and of fire; and He will protect and defend 'the glory,'†—this glorious restoration of his Name which He has effected—as a tent shelters the traveller from the sun or the storm, or as the same pillar of cloud or fire defended the hosts of Israel from the pursuing enemy or the burning noonday heat:—

And the LORD will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount
Zion,
And upon her assemblies,
A cloud and smoke by day,
And the shining of a flaming fire by night:
For upon all the glory shall be a defence.
And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time
from the heat,
And for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from
rain.

* They seem to have preached regularly on Sabbaths and New-moons:—
2 Kings, iv. 23.

† 'For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.'—Zechariah ii. 5.

CHAPTER IV.

ISAIAH V. COMING WOES. — FUSING POWER OF IMAGINATION. — HEBREW IDYLL. — ANCIENT FERTILITY OF JUDÆA — PRESENT BARRENNESS. — THE VINEYARD OF THE LORD OF HOSTS. — SELFISHNESS IN AN ARISTOCRACY. — RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF LANDOWNERS. — PROPERTY A TRUST. — HEBREW AND ENGLISH LAWS OF ENTAIL. — WORD AND WORK OF THE LORD. — GOD A CONSTITUTIONAL RULER. — ABUSE OF WORDS BY WORLDLY MEN. — THUCYDIDES. — FULFILMENT OF ISAIAH'S THREATS TO HIS COTEMPORARIES — AND TO ALL AGES SINCE. — GROTIUS ON PROPHECY.

THE contents of this discourse show it to belong to the same period as the two preceding ones; but perhaps we may see some indications that it properly follows them, as being of rather a later date. The gloom of the approaching calamities is deeper, and in addition to the previous pictures of the effects of foreign invasion, we have now a description of the invaders themselves, and of their coming, hardly less explicit than when the prophet speaks of them by name to king Ahaz, in chapter vii. verse 18.

The last prophecy began with an apologue of 'the Last Days;' this opens with a like poetical picture of the former and the present times of Israel. Isaiah seems for a moment to think of Zion as in the days of her first love, when she still called the LORD 'her Beloved;' and in her name he begins to speak:— and then, in the rapid transitions which succeed, we have one of the instances, almost as frequent in Isaiah as in Shakspeare or Milton, of that true poet's imagination, which does not merely collect and arrange a succession of beautiful thoughts, but fuses them into one homogeneous whole, though they may be so diverse that less skilful hands could hardly bring them together. The Hebrew Pastoral or Idyll, as we see in the Canticles, chooses the imagery of the vineyard rather than that of the sheepfold. The Jewish poets embody their ideal of a happy life, in the sitting under their own vine and under their own fig-

tree; and this ‘Song of the Beloved touching his vineyard,’ gives a lively picture of what a vineyard was.* ‘*Apertos Bacchus amat colles* ;’ and this vineyard is on (literally *in, i. e.* on the side of), a hill, of which the Hebrew expresses the fertility by calling it ‘a horn the son of oil.’ Oil may here be used metaphorically for fertility, or the vineyards of Palestine may have been planted with olive trees, which would at once support the vines and supply a fruit of their own; and if there were any other trace in the Scriptures of the belief that the olive increased the fruitfulness of the vine when they grew together, we might suppose an allusion to it here. Lowth and other commentators illustrate the word *horn* by instances of the same and like metaphors in other languages. We call a promontory a *cape* or head, and the Turks a *nose* ; a ridge in Latin is *dorsum* ; Brundisium, which, according to Strabo, signifies a stag’s head in the ancient language of the country, is described by Lucan as stretching out a tongue and horns into the Adriatic. Solinus says that the south of Italy divides into two horns, and Camden that ‘Cornwall is called by the inhabitants, in the British tongue, *Kernaw*, as lessening by degrees like a horn, running out into promontories like so many horns.’ So Statius has *Cornu Parnassi*, and the Swiss have such names as *Buchhorn*, *Schreckhorn*, for mountains. And so Demetrius told Philip, that ‘the hill Ithomè (with its citadel of Messenè) and the Acrocorinthus, were the two horns of the Peloponnesus, which he who held was master of the bull.’† Lowth farther observes, with his wonted taste, that ‘Whoever has considered the descriptions given of Mount Tabor, and the views of it which are to be seen in books of travels; its regular conic form rising singly in a plain to a great height from a base small in proportion; its beauty and fertility to the very top, will have a good idea of “a horn the son of oil.”’ The land of Israel was once a fertile as well as a mountainous country: Moses calls it ‘the mountain of thine (God’s) inheritance’‡ and ‘that goodly mountain’; § and

* “Schulz states that he supped under a vine whose stem was about a foot and a half in diameter, its height about thirty feet, while its branches and branchlets, which had to be supported, formed a tent of upwards of thirty feet square.”—Kitto’s *Bibl. Cyclop.*, art. *Vine*.

† Polyb. vii. 11. quoted in Grote’s *History of Greece*, x. 309.

‡ Exod. xv. 17.

§ Deut. iii. 25.

afterwards describes it as ‘ a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills ; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates ; a land of oil olive, and honey ; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it ; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass : . . . a land which the LORD thy God careth for : the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.’* The eyes of the LORD have ceased to be upon it ; the curse has been as truly fulfilled as once the blessing ; and the traveller now finds the mountains returned to their natural barrenness, though still bearing traces of long-abandoned cultivation. The way in which the change has been effected, is thus lucidly explained :— ‘ Judæa, the southern part of Palestine, is a country full of hills and valleys, conformably to the Scriptural intimations. The hills are generally separated from one another by valleys and torrents, and are for the most part of moderate height, uneven, and seldom of any regular figure. The rock of which they are composed is easily converted into soil ; which, being arrested by terraces when washed down by the rains, renders the hills cultivable in a series of long narrow gardens, formed by these terraces, from the base upwards. Thus, the hills were cultivated in former times most abundantly ; and were enriched and beautified with the olive, the fig-tree, and the vine ; and thus the limited cultivation which now subsists is still carried on. But when the inhabitants were rooted out and cultivation abandoned, the terraces fell to decay, and the soil which had collected on them was washed down into the valleys, leaving only the arid rock, naked and desolate. This is the general character : but in some parts the hills are beautifully wooded ; and in others, the application of the ancient mode of cultivation — under which the valleys are covered with corn, while the terraced hills are clothed with fig-trees, olive-trees, or vines — suggests to the traveller how rich this country once was and still might be, and how beautiful was the aspect which it offered. All these characteristics of desolation apply with peculiar force

* Deut. viii. 7—9., xi. 12.

to that portion of Judæa which formed the inheritance of Benjamin. Its most favourably situated mountains are wholly uncultivated; and perhaps in no other country is such a mass of rock exhibited, without an atom of soil.*

I believe that in a poetical allegory there is always more or less of allusion to the details of that which is allegorised; but it is only allusion, — to be realised by the imagination, rather than by the understanding, of the reader, as well as of the poet. The several images are parts of a picture, which must be contemplated as a picture, and its meaning is to enter into the mind through the imagination. Still, a matter-of-fact commentator, like Vitranga, deeply imbued with the spirit of his author, will sometimes greatly help his reader's imagination, even by his unimaginative remarks: and I think this is the case in his explanation of the details of this description of the vineyard.—A vineyard consists of vines planted for the sake of their fruit: the Hebrew nation with its tribes, its families, and its persons, was such a vineyard, appointed to bring forth the fruits of personal and social religion and virtue, — holiness, righteousness, and love to God and man: this nation was established in a land flowing with milk and honey, endowed with all natural advantages, all circumstances which could favour inward life by outward prosperity; and the grace and favour of the LORD, and the influences of His Spirit, always symbolised by oil, were continually causing it to be fruitful: 'And he fenced it,' — the arm of the LORD of hosts, employing kings and heroes, was its defence against all enemies; its institutions were fitted to preserve internal order, and to prevent the admixture of evil from without, with the chosen and separated nation; and its territory was marked out and protected by natural boundaries in a noticeable manner: 'And gathered out the stones,' — the heathen nations, and the stocks and stones they worshipped: 'And planted it with the choicest vine,' — a nation of the noble stock of the patriarchs, and chosen and cultivated by the Lord of the vineyard, with especial care, for his own use: 'And built a tower in it,' — namely, Jerusalem — for the protection and superintendence of the vineyard, as well as to be its farm-house, so to speak: 'And also made a wine-press therein,' — where the wine-press seems to

* Kitto's *Physical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 32, 33.

point to the same idea as the sending the servants to receive the fruit in our Lord's modification of this parable: lawgivers, kings, and judges, the temple with its priesthood and ordinances, and the schools of the prophets, were the appointed means for pressing out and receiving the wine — the spiritual virtues and graces of the vineyard.* And the end is, that

He looked that it should bring forth grapes,
And it brought forth wild grapes.

The master of the vineyard appeals to the inhabitant of Jerusalem, as to an impartial stranger, to judge what more could have been done for the vineyard; and to approve his decision as to what shall be done, when the stock of the choicest vine† has turned out to produce nothing but wild, or crab-grapes, after all the culture bestowed on it: it is worthy of nothing but to be laid waste, and this is what he will do to it. And then (by one of those transitions and fusions of the parts of the imagery into a perfect whole), after the utterance of what an earthly master of a vineyard might do, follows, 'I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it;' — which reminds us that it is the LORD of hosts who is speaking, and that His vineyard is the House of Israel. The men of Judah, who were the plants of His choice and delight, have brought Him the fruits of their mere sinful nature, instead of those of His election and grace: 'He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry:' and the inhabitant of Jerusalem, who had been appealed to, as an impartial judge between the vineyard and its master, hears the still voice of his own reason

* Grotius, following Jerome, explains the wine-press by the altar with its blood of sacrifices.

† "Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?" Jeremiah ii. 21. Lysias, in the place quoted above (page 2.), attributes the 'noble and wonderful deeds' of the Athenians to their noble stock as well as to their political wisdom: — *Καὶ γὰρ τοὶ καὶ φύντες καλῶς καὶ γινόντες ὁμοίαι, κ. τ. λ.* He just before explains this noble birth to be their autochthony, which had enabled their political existence to be a just one from the very first, instead of being founded, in the ordinary way, on the violent expulsion of a previous race. The same idea is recognised by the Hebrews in their habitual claim to their land as the land of their father Abraham. How far this was, or was not, the ground of their right, I shall notice hereafter.

and conscience pronouncing to him, as it did to the pharisee who listened to the same parable 800 years afterwards, 'Thou art the man.'

Selfishness, or the making self the centre to which all things are to tend, is the great sin in all ages and peoples. As soon as national institutions have awakened the sense of personality and the feeling of self-respect, the evil desire of accumulating wealth for that self begins to arise. And in no form is it more hateful than in connection with the possession of land. Men desire, by an almost universal instinct, to possess property in land, with its healthy occupations and interests, so varied and multiplied by the living powers of nature; and this kind of property, while it offers more enjoyment than any other, brings a claim for more, and more obvious, duties than any other, by bringing a man into more complete personal relationships with his neighbours than is possible in the crowd of cities, and the whirl of city trades. And therefore the prophet pronounces his first, and, as it were, a special woe, on the selfish landowner. He who can join house to house, and lay field to field, when he knows, and long has known, face to face, the very man, wife, and child whom he has dispossessed, and can drive out by his own simple act his fellow-men to be desolate in their poverty, in order that he may be alone in his riches, may expect a punishment proportioned to his crime. Such men were the nobles of Judah and Israel throughout the land; and the prophet heard, ringing in his ears, the declaration of the LORD and King of the land, that the great and fair palaces should become as desolate as the peasants' and yeomen's cottages which had made place for them: — the lordly vineyard of ten acres shall yield but eight gallons of wine, and the corn-field shall give back but a tenth part of the seed sown in it.

We have all seen, in the present day, how this eternal law of politics has been executed in Ireland by the famine, with its inevitable accompaniments the Poor Law and the Encumbered Estates Act: and though the course of social changes is so noiseless in England that it attracts less attention; yet those who do look into the reasons why this or that estate passes from an old to a new owner, can usually see plainly enough that those reasons are moral ones — that when a man has to sell the home of his

fathers, it is almost invariably because he and they had ceased to acknowledge that they held it on the tenure of social duties. All property whatever is, doubtless, a trust; but the principle always has been, and always must be, more clearly illustrated in landed, than in any other property; and this, not less by the efforts of selfish men to deny, than of good men to assert it. If we suppose the history of England to be the gazette of its battles, we may be content to explain our feudal institutions in the middle ages as arrangements for providing the kings with soldiers: but, looking a little deeper, we see that they were a complex organisation of patriarchal government; in which, if the tenure of the landowner's occasional military service to the king was the more palpable, it was not more real, nor more important as an element of national life and progress, than the daily and hourly performance of his, and his wife's, and children's, personal and social duties to their vassals. In as far as the feudal spirit was true to itself, it taught the English lord to hold that it was the mark, not of the Christian gentleman but of the usurer and the alien, to have a merely selfish right in property which he could call his own: and when, in a later age, the gentleman borrowed the usurer's money, and then pleaded his family's inalienable right to its land in bar of repayment, we were happily drawing towards a stage of our history in which the law was strong enough to assert its majesty against even the statute-makers of the time being, and to teach them that they had duties to usurers and aliens, as well as to a vassal yeomanry.* Then the judge upon the bench showed himself more than a

* I refer, of course, to the subtle legal construction by which the judges, in Edward IV.'s reign, gave the first deadly blow to the famous statute *De Donis*, 13 Edw. 1. c. 1. This was a law by which the barons thought effectually to prevent any future alienation of their estates from their respective families. But after throwing out hints in the long interval, as to what could be done, the judges under Edward IV. decided that an 'estate-tail' could be effectually converted into a 'fee-simple,' by the fiction of 'common recovery.' The king may have sanctioned or connived at this decision, with a view to break the power of traitor-barons the easier; but when we remember the growing spirit of independence in the educated class, and the increased importance of trade, there seems little doubt that the judges were conscious of the higher motive of compelling even nobles to pay their debts and leave off trampling on the middle classes.

match, in the cause of justice, for the baron in parliament: and now, when our ways of effecting our ends are become very different, though the ends themselves—of truth or of selfishness—are still the same, the latest developments of the science of political economy are bringing out the same results in the form suited to this age. For they are proving, beyond refutation, that while an old and civilised State like ours, has the deepest interest—probably that of its very existence—in the maintenance of each individual's absolute legal property in his estate, it has an equally deep interest in his using his property in the way most beneficial to the community; and a public and indefeasible right, limited only by considerations of practical expediency, to enforce that user by any necessary means.* It may be thought strange to doubt the existence of a 'natural right' of property; but I believe that, if we look quietly to the bottom of the matter, we shall see that the ordinary assertion of such a right is partly a misapplication of abstract reason to a subject which lies altogether within the region of positive institutions, historical experience, and the calculations of expediency; and partly a selfish animal instinct, which reveals its true nature by its rage and fear at any alarm of losing its material possessions, and by the resolution which it then shows to defend these by all that physical force of police and soldiers, for the organisation of which alone society seems to it to exist. 'Right, in its most proper sense, is the creature of law and statute, and only in the technical language of the courts has it any substantial and independent sense. In morals, right is a word without meaning, except as the correlative of duty.'†

It is hard to say how a nation, which is to preserve its own orderly existence, can remain without some laws or institutions

* See especially the chapters on landed property in Mr. J. Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*.

† Coleridge's *Lay Sermons*, p. 66. edit. 1852.—I have purposely adopted, as to the 'natural right' of property, Coleridge's argument, and almost his words, as to Jacobinism, which all agree is the assertion of man's 'natural right' to power. It is instructive to be reminded how ultra-conservatism and ultra-liberalism agree in appealing to 'natural rights' instead of to the positive laws of an historical constitution,—to the petty individual reason, instead of to the universal reason, which, because it is universal, can only manifest itself in successive historical developments.

for encouraging, or at least permitting, the disposition of its members to found families, to be maintained by hereditary possessions in land. Yet, if this disposition be not kept within bounds, those who are influenced by it will ‘join house to house, and field to field, till there be no place;’ till the race of small landholders, yeomen, and partly independent tenants, is swallowed up by a few rich despots. To prevent this evil among the Jews, Moses directed as equal a division of the land as possible in the first instance, among the whole 600,000 families who originally formed the nation; and provided against the permanent alienation of any estate, by giving a right of repurchase to the seller and his relations, and of repossession without purchase at the Jubilee.* The story of Naboth † illustrates the effect of these laws in forming an order of sturdy independent yeomen; but it must also be taken as an instance of the habitual breach of the same laws by the rich and powerful ‡ as they in like manner disobeyed that respecting the liberation of slaves at the Jubilee.§ In England, where the Norman conquest had accumulated all the land in the hands of a few nobles, the like result of checking this accumulation has been effected by laws, in their form exactly opposite to those of Moses;—by the permission to cut off old entails, and the prohibition to make new ones, except for one generation; and by allowing land to be bought and sold like other commodities. The Hebrew constitution provided by law for the preservation of the old families, while our constitution at the same time that it gives them the means of sustaining themselves with even the most ordinary internal virtue and energy, permits them, if they become effete and worthless, to give way to new and more vigorous houses, which have raised themselves out of the ranks below; and thus new blood is continually infused into the old organisation of the state. I do not indeed say, nor think, that our existing means are as effectual as they might be for the latter purpose; but the law has very much less, and the private arrangements of fathers and sons very much more, to do with the alienation or retention of family estates than is supposed by most of the common argu-

* Levit. xxv. 8—11., 23—28.

† 1 Kings, xxi. 1—24.

‡ Compare Micah, ii. 2.; Nehem. v. 1—13.; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.

§ Jer. xxxiv. 8—16.

ments for or against ' laws of primogeniture ' in England. Some remedies, too, are as bad as the disease; and we must be cautious how we try to direct English free-will by Continental restrictions. But how imperfectly we realise the ideal of the constitution; how deeply liable we are to the denunciations of the Hebrew prophet; and in what degree this national sin, with its practical bad consequences, might be checked by legislation, as well as preached against by the Church; these points must be left for the reader's consideration. I would also direct his attention to the progress of the world as shown in the comparison of these opposite means, in ancient Israel and modern England, for effecting the same end, and for providing that element of the political constitution of each which the Jews marked by the name of ' tribe,' and we usually call ' feudal,' or ' aristocratic,' but which is properly the element of *family* life as distinguished from the several other elements — industrious, intellectual, moral, religious, which have all their appropriate political forms of expression, and which together unite in one constitution or body-politic. Before the times of the Christian Church, with its assertion of a spiritual constitution and order, which at once demanded the highest personal responsibility and permitted the fullest personal liberty, to its members, it was not possible for a State to allow its existence to depend so greatly on the free-will of its citizens as it now can; nor to leave the provisions for such a main element of its organisation as (for instance) the breaking up of old families and the formation of new ones, with all the hazards consequent on both, to be regulated by the will, and according to the personal character, of the individual agents.

Men grasp wealth that they may expend it in luxury; and at last in the most sensual forms of luxury,—drinking and revelling. Such is the state of the rich men Isaiah sees around him. As in another age, the old Roman, who touched nothing, least of all ardent drinks, till the ninth hour of the day*, was succeeded by the race who could boast with Horace, —

* " They always ate but once a day, and that was in the evening." — Description of the Golden Age in King Alfred's *Boethius*, S. Turner's *Hist. of England*, ii. 36.

‘Est qui nec veteris pocula Massici,
Nec partem solido demere de die
Spernit;’

so the land of Israel has fallen from the blest state in which its princes ‘ate not in the morning, but in due season, for strength and not for drunkenness;’* and we see men

‘That put far away the evil day,
And cause the seat of violence to come near;
That lie upon beds of ivory,
And stretch themselves upon their couches,
And eat the lambs out of the flock,
And the calves out of the midst of the stall;
That chant to the sound of the viol,
And invent to themselves instruments of music, like David;
That drink wine in bowls,
And anoint themselves with the choicest ointments:
But are not grieved with the affliction of Joseph.’ †

And thus embruted, they have lost all sense of there being any divine order and government of the world, for have they not even obliterated the natural distinctions of healthy appetite, and of night and day? They cannot retain any glimmering of that which God had revealed to their nation, above all other nations, and was still telling them by the mouth of His prophets,—that the whole world, social no less than natural, the heavens as well as the earth, had been created according to the designs conceived in the eternal mind of God himself, of which mind the declaration and explanation is called his ‘Word,’ the actual realisation of the design his ‘Work,’ and the various processes by which He is effecting that realisation the ‘Operation of his hands,’ while the ultimate end of the whole is named the ‘Glory of God.’ ‡

They have no knowledge either of the Word or the Work of the LORD: they lack that which alone could save them, which alone has upheld any nation, in any age or clime, and which alone can uphold us now here in England. Their feasting and

* Eccles. x. 17.

† Amos, vi. 3—6. where the prophet is speaking of the same Jewish nobles.

‡ Compare Psalms, xxxiii. 4., xcii. 4, 5., cxi. 2—8., lxiv. 9, 10., xxviii. 5., lxxvii. 12, 13, 14.

drunkenness is about to be succeeded by thirst and famine; by an indefinite, hopeless, desolation of the whole land, dark and deep as death and the grave; so that hell, with its insatiable maw, shall be the only banqueter, and its food the hopes and life as well as the bodies of men.

The nation has forgotten God, the LORD living and reigning among them; they are sunk into selfish, carnal ease, trusting in their riches and glory, and in the apparent stability of their civil and ecclesiastical institutions. Therefore the LORD summons this carnal glory, and the men who trust in it, to judgment, to try what there is in it, whether it has anything by which it can stand without His help; and then they will see by the judgment and its execution (which will be according to truth and righteousness), that all their glorious endowments were given them by God as witnesses of Himself, and means whereby to attain to the knowledge of Him, but that apart from Him they have no worth. This judgment came upon the men whom Isaiah addressed, in the reign of Ahaz, soon after the delivery of the warning; but in order fully to understand it, we must (as in the case of all the other prophecies) look at it in the light of the Gospel. Then was the selfish and carnal nation brought to its final and most awful trial, righteously condemned, and its sentence carried into execution by that Man whom God had appointed. And then, while all flesh, not excepting those institutions which God had himself ordained, but which men had turned into a lie, was utterly humbled, did God exalt Himself and His Son, and sanctify His holy Name, setting it up in the world, and causing it to triumph over all opposition. In the present day our consciences are so insensible, that we can hardly realise any practical belief in the reality of judgments from God upon our nation. One reason of this seems to be, that such vague recognition as remains to us of a Divine King invisibly reigning over the nation, is rather the acknowledgment of a despotic than a constitutional lord; one who from time to time puts forth his power to prevent or punish flagrant crimes, but not one who is steadily governing us by fixed laws, and administering settled institutions. For though we may slavishly dread an arbitrary will, we can never feel for it that salutary fear which is the beginning of wisdom; and unless we believe

that God's judgments are righteous — that they are a part of the steady administration of a polity — as well as good in their effects, it will be impossible for us to keep long from superstition, or its opposite, scepticism. And, therefore, we should take heed to this repeated assertion, that God is exalted in executing *justice*, and sanctified in *righteousness*. The sanctifying God is the recognising and worshipping Him as holy and separate from all other gods, and the renouncing and denying all others as false gods. This shall be the end of the LORD's judgments: and the prophet contemplates the judgment and the reformation with a chastened contentment, while he pictures the once richly cultivated fields as become a pasture for lambs; and the lands of the selfish nobles, after being desolated by the Assyrian invader, as now restored to a humble peace by the presence of the wandering shepherds, those friendly strangers, Rechabites or Kenites, who still appeared from time to time in the plains of Palestine with their flocks, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had themselves done in old times, when they too were strangers (the same word) in the land of the Canaanites.

There is no need to decide whether we are to give a literal or an allegorical meaning to this verse, for the one image into which the two are fused is the only adequate counterpart to the event: the lands wasted by the inroads and invasions which followed the delivery of this prophecy were no doubt pastured by flocks that were owned by others than the former landlords; and the rule of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and their rich and selfish nobles, was succeeded by that of the lamblike Hezekiah. 'He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street, and said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place. For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place unto the God

of Israel. Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes. For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us.* Nor must we forget that other and greater fulfilment of the words when Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, said, ‘The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.’†

The sensual reveller simply disregards God’s constitution and government of society; but the shrewd man of the world, and the intellectual sceptic, sneeringly deny its reality. ‘Wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight,’ do they not see clearly that selfishness is at bottom the one real motive-power of society? priests or prophets may preach about good and evil, light and darkness, right and wrong, as though these words represented realities essentially contrary; but do not they know that these are but words, useful instruments by which wise men govern fools, but to which they are themselves no slaves? shall the astute and able men who have been transacting public affairs, or their own business, with such perfect success for so long past, who have carried on the whole social and political mechanism during the prosperous reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, be threatened with this ‘counsel and

* 2 Chron. xxix. 3—10.

† 1 Corinthians, i. 25—31.

work of the LORD?’ Strong at once in their religious formalism, and their pride of worldly craft, they reply, ‘Let Him make speed, and hasten His work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!’—In the act and habit of thus rejecting the guidance of the LORD, they have harnessed themselves to their sin as to a waggon, and they shall draw the load of their choice till they find whether it be the woe that the prophet declares it to be.

Vitringa quotes the famous description by Thucydides, of the like confusion between virtues and vices, and their very names, the consequence of the Greek civil wars: *Καὶ τὴν εἰωθυῖαν ἀξιῶ-σιν τῶν ὀνομάτων εἰς τὰ ἔργα ἀντήλλαξαν τῇ δικαιοῦσει· τόλμα μὲν γὰρ ἀλόγιστος, ἀνδρία φιλέταιρος ἐνομίσθη· μέλλησις δὲ προμηθής, δειλία εὐπρεπής· κ. τ. λ.** And he then goes on to observe, that there are principles of truth in man’s heart which are the foundations of all right, justice, and virtue—principles not only true in themselves, but ‘good’ and ‘sweet’ in their effects: that the revelation of Jehovah, His covenant with Abraham and his descendants, His laws and promises of temporal and eternal life to all who should obey them, were especially the ‘light’ of the Jews; and were ‘good’ and ‘sweet,’ because the source of all consolations in every struggle with evil, and the bond by which their political society was held together: that the wicked were not satisfied with practically renouncing this light, with its excellent fruits, but denied them by arguments, and perversion of the proper meaning of words: and that while this was a national sin in the days of Isaiah, the Jews filled up the measure of their iniquity in the time of Christ, when they rejected the Light of life as darkness, and evil, and bitter, making the light that was in them to be darkness.

Lastly, among the men whom Isaiah denounces as the corrupters and destroyers of the society of which they are the

* “The received value of names imposed for signification of things, was changed into arbitrary: for inconsiderate boldness was counted true-hearted manliness; provident deliberation, a handsome fear; modesty, the cloak of cowardice; to be wise in everything, to be lazy in everything,” &c. — *Hobbes’s Translation*, iii. 82.

leaders, are the unjust lawyers and judges: he mentions as characteristic of them, that they are heroes at drinking, by which, perhaps, we are to understand, not that their heads and senses were overcome with wine like the drunkards spoken of above; but that the effect on their hearts and consciences was such as to harden them in their criminal perversion of the law. Perhaps the passage might be illustrated by instances of the professional character of hard-drinking but strong-headed judges of other times.

The prophet then goes on,

Therefore, as the fire devoureth the stubble,
And the flame consumeth the chaff,
So their root shall be as rottenness,
And their blossom shall go up as dust :
Because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts,
And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

The 'law' of the LORD was given by Moses, and embodied in institutions and a code; the 'word' was that exposition of the meaning and life of these which the prophets were from time to time declaring in the ears of the people. The nation had cast away this law, and despised this word. And when all heart and morality are thus gone from a nation, its roots below ground are rotten; and its flourishing appearance is ready to turn to dust, like the apples which the traveller still gathers on the shore of the sea of Sodom. There is no substance in such a people, nothing which can stand calamity of any kind.

Already, when the prophet speaks, the LORD has smitten them in his anger. Whether the earthquake which happened in the reign of Uzziah had actually filled the streets of Jerusalem with dead bodies, or whether Isaiah only makes it the image or instance of wider-spread national judgments, we cannot pronounce historically; but in either case, the past and present is but a foretaste of heavier woes impending: the LORD has made the hills of their national prosperity to tremble, and personal suffering has begun: but 'for all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still.' He is about to bring foreign armies as the instruments of His judgment: the vision of the worst of human calamities — the invasion of a rich, civilised, luxurious nation by overwhelming hordes of

barbarians—rises before the prophet; he speaks of them as present, and his words strike a kind of terror into the heart of him who reads them now, while he thinks of their fearful import then. The men and women who heard Isaiah speak these words in the court of the temple, in the highway of the Fuller's Field, or in some other crowded thoroughfare; who lived to see fathers and husbands, and sons and brothers, killed in the several invasions which soon followed, or mothers, wives, and daughters driven like herds of cattle to a sale and slavery worse than death; and whose wealth and sources of wealth were utterly wasted by these and like inroads into their populous and highly cultivated little country; could not have thought the prophet's language too strong for the events, though it seems so to many commentators of the last, or even the present century. Yet we must not forget that in an imaginative and unphilosophic age, more of the idea of prophecy has been preserved by several such commentators seeking its fulfilment in several distant events, than could have been the case if they had agreed to restrict it (as Grotius* and others have too dryly done) to the mere contemporaneous history. It is such a picture of 'the life of things,' that it is equally the description of the same judgment of God, in whatever age or to whatever nation occurring. In successive ages it told the Jew of the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Greek, and the Roman; to the subject of the Roman empire it spoke no less clearly of the Goth and the Vandal; the British monk must have recalled it in the days when Gildas recorded the invasion of the Saxon; the degene-

* Nothing, indeed, can be sounder than the principle which Grotius lays down on this subject. He says, "In the prophecies, I have made it a main object to refer the particulars to the corresponding historical events: the reader will judge with what success. In this way certain passages which the old commentators refer to Christ and the times of the Gospel, I have referred to events nearer the prophet's own times, yet as involving a type of those other Gospel times. I have done this because I saw it to be the only way of preserving that coherence of words and things which in the rest of the prophetic books is so admirable; and, indeed, these passages do reveal to us Christians the counsel of God, who has shadowed forth to us the Messiah, and the benefits given us through Him, not by words only, but also by events."—*Prefat. ad Annotat. ad Vet. Testamentum.*

rate Saxon learnt its truth from the Dane and the Norman; and the Spaniard from the Mahometan; the Byzantine from Timour 'the incarnate wrath of God;' the Continental peoples from the revolutionary armies and Napoleon.' There is no land or nation where this terrible prophecy has not been fulfilled: may God give us Englishmen grace to take heed betimes, lest we need to be roused from our too thoughtless and selfish indifference, and find that these words, read, but scarcely listened to in our churches, have an awful practical meaning to us!

And He hath lifted up an ensign to the nations from far,
 And hath hissed unto them from the end of the earth:
 And, behold, they will come right speedily.
 None hath fainted nor stumbled among them;
 None shall slumber nor sleep;
 Neither is the girdle of their loins loosed,
 Nor the latchet of their shoes broken:
 Whose arrows are sharpened,
 And all their bows bent;
 Their horses' hoofs are counted like flint
 And their wheels like a whirlwind:
 Their roar is like that of a lioness,
 They shall roar like young lions:
 Yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey,
 And shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it.
 And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of
 the sea:
 And if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow,
 And the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

From the days of Isaiah this prophecy was fulfilled to the Jews again and again, till their cup was full, in the time of the Romans. Such are the judgments with which God visits a nation which forsakes Him, and obstinately refuses to return, 'Read,' says Vitranga, 'Psalm, lxix. 22—28. and cix. 5—20. and tremble.'

CHAPTER V.

ISAIAH VI. THE PROPHET'S COMMISSION.—THE TEMPLE—ITS SCENES.—THE VISION.—INSIGHT INTO THE LIFE OF THINGS.—PROPHECY RATIONAL AND INTELLIGIBLE.—GOD THE REAL AND ACTUAL KING.—PLURAL OF MAJESTY.—HOLINESS OF GOD — HIS JUSTICE. — CALVINISM.

THE expression 'In the year that King Uzziah died I saw,' implies that Isaiah wrote this account of his vision some time after it occurred; and both this and the like phrase in chapter xiv. 28. suggest the thought that the prophet himself revised and arranged the book of his prophecies. Whether these expressions refer to dates before or after the death of the kings mentioned in them, has been much disputed: in chapter xiv. the context will allow of either interpretation, nor in that of the passage before us can we assert that either is incongruous. Yet it seems reasonable to think with Gesenius, that if the meaning were *after*, the phrase would rather have been 'In the first year of Jotham (or Hezekiah);' and if we suppose with him and other commentators, among whom Jarchi rests on the authority of the *Gemara*, that the chapter before us is the record of Isaiah's original calling and consecration to the prophetic office, then it must be referred to Uzziah's lifetime, as the only prophecy which can correspond with the words of the inscription 'which he saw in the days of Uzziah.'* There is certainly a great resemblance to the parallel accounts of the calling of Jeremiah and Ezekiel at the beginning of their prophecies†: and though this cannot be said to be conclusive against the supposition that Isaiah may have begun to preach, before this vision gave the formal ratification of his appointment to the office for which the whole style of this as of his other writings shows him to have been long educating; and though it would be no disparagement of the authority of that ratification to consider that it recognised

* Ch. i. 1.

† Jer. i.; Ezek. i. ii.

views of God's character, and of the state and prospects of the Jewish nation, which had already become familiar to the inspired seer, while it confirmed and sanctioned them in a solemn and formal decree; yet, perhaps, the actual manner and words of the commission which Isaiah now receives, rather indicate that it was the root and source of those prophecies which stand before it in the book, and in which there is an expansion, in various forms, of its fundamental ideas, than that it was a condensed summary of truths already fully developed in his mind and in these discourses. 'Once for all,' says Ewald, 'must he who was to be a prophet, have become absolutely certain of the true relation of the world and Jehovah, — must have beheld, as in a distinct form, the sublime and holy character of Jehovah, and felt that he was directed by Him alone: once for all must he have recognised the divine power of truth against the whole world, and himself as living and moving in it alone: once for all must he have entered, with the effectual energy and act of his whole inner being, into the counsels of God, and found himself for ever bound by them, and endowed by these bonds with true power and freedom: — this was the first condition, and the true beginning of all the work of the prophet, the holy consecration and the inner call, without which none became a true prophet; and only he who had thus first turned his eyes within, and there found clearness and strength of sight, could afterwards look clearly and firmly into the world without, and there do his work as a prophet. Therefore, on the nature and strength of this beginning depended the whole subsequent life and work of a prophet: . . . where the true and vigorous beginning of the work was wanting, all subsequent endeavours were weak and defective, empty, and unfruitful; while in the true prophets that beginning never ceased to be operative, and the memory of it bloomed without fading in later years. If such a prophet undertook to record his more important prophecies in writing, he put at the head of them, and with a just consciousness of its significance, a description of that holy moment — often of a time long gone by — when he had first known Jehovah in His true majesty, and felt that he was called, sanctified, and endowed with strength by Him.'*

* Ewald, *Die Propheten*, i. 20.

We shall then account, as has been already said, for the position of the earlier prophecies, by considering that they give a complete picture of the state of the nation at the time that Isaiah received his commission and entered on his office, and so supply us with the preliminary information necessary to the adequate comprehension of these. For the times of Jotham were but the continuation and counterpart of those of Uzziah, as to their selfishness, luxury, and worldliness, only that these were more and more rapidly preparing their own punishment by eating away the military and otherwise energetic spirit which had animated the people under Uzziah.

The scene of this Vision is the Temple; and its features will have been the same, whether we suppose them to have risen before Isaiah's imagination while he was absent from the spot, in the solitude of his chamber, or his house-top, or assume (as I myself prefer to do) that he was actually praying in the temple at the time.

Though it is unlikely that any of the successors to what was but a small remnant of Solomon's kingdom, perfectly restored the temple after it was deprived of its original splendour by Shishak in the reign of Rehoboam, yet we see the worthier princes from time to time repairing the structure where it had been suffered to fall into decay, and replacing, as far as they could, the treasures and the costly decorations of which it was repeatedly despoiled to buy off foreign invaders; and probably there was no period in which the restoration would be more complete than in the reign of Uzziah, who, in his power, wealth, and magnificence, came nearer than any other to Solomon. And there will be much more of fact than of fancy in the picture, if, for the clearer understanding of the scene of this vision, we figure to ourselves the youthful prophet in his rough hair or woollen garment (possibly not unlike that of the Capuchin friar as we now see him in the streets or churches of Rome) going up to the temple to worship; — and if we look with him at the temple, as, at the end of 300 years from its building, it must have presented itself to his eyes, with its ample courts and colonnades, its porch with high spire-like front, and its Holy House, and Holy of Holies, well-proportioned, and of the most elaborate workmanship, though rather massive than

large, according to our notions. As he crossed the variegated pavement of the 'great court of the congregation,' and stopped—for we have no reason to suppose him a Levite—at the entrance to the inner or 'priests' court,' on each hand would rise one of the tall pillars which Solomon set up, in token that the kingdom was constituted by the LORD, and would be upheld by His might*, and which, once of 'bright brass,' but now mellowed into bronze, had their square capitals richly wreathed with molten lilies, chain-work, and pomegranates; before him, resting on the back of the twelve oxen, and cast, like them, in brass, would appear the 'molten sea,' a basin of thirty cubits in circumference, and containing two or three thousand *baths* of water, its brim wrought 'like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies,' and under these a double row of ornamental knobs; while on each side stood five smaller lavers, the bases of which rested on wheels, and were most elaborately ornamented with oxen, lions, cherubims, and palm-trees, engraved upon them; and beyond these again he would see the great brazen altar of burnt offering, with its never-extinguished fire; and overhead the roof of thick cedar beams resting on rows of columns. These were the courts of the palace of the divine King of Israel†, for the reception of his subjects and his ministers. The house itself again consisted of two parts, the outer of which, the holy place, was accessible to those priests who were in immediate attendance on their unseen Sovereign, while the inner, or holiest place, was the very presence-chamber of the Monarch who 'dwelt between the cherubims,' which spread their golden wings over the ark containing the covenant. He had vouchsafed to enter into with His people, and itself forming 'the mercy-seat,' where was 'the place of His throne and the place of the soles of His feet.' In the position which I have, following the requirements of the narrative in the chapter before us, supposed

* Can there be much doubt that this was the meaning of *Jachin* and *Boaz* (2 Chron. iii. 17.)? As Solomon had the help of Tyrian architects, it is interesting to compare the mention of the two pillars which Herodotus saw in the temple of Hercules, at Tyre.—*Herodotus*, ii. 44.

† Compare the description of Solomon's own house, which, besides its inner porch, had another, where he sat to judge the people, 1 Kings, vii. 7. The arrangement of the Temple is plainly that of a palace.

Isaiah to be placed, he would see through the open folding-doors of cypress, carved 'with cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers,' and 'covered with gold upon the carved work,' into the holy place, which he could not enter; and the light of the golden lamps on either side would show him the cedar panelling of the walls, carved with knobs and open flowers, with cherubims and palm-trees, festooned with chain-work, and richly gilt; the mosaics of precious stones; the cypress floor; the altar of incense; the table with the shewbread; the censers, tongs, and other furniture of 'pure and perfect gold;' and before the doorway at the further end, and not concealed by the open leaves of the olive-wood doors (carved and gilded like the others), would be distinguishable the folds of the vail 'of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen,' embroidered with cherubims. In the East the closed vail, or *purdah*, declares the presence and secures the privacy of the monarch, into which no man may intrude and live; and in the temple at Jerusalem it was the symbol of the awful presence and unapproachable majesty of the King, the LORD of hosts. The pious and thoughtful Jew, taught to connect the presence of his God with this actual dwelling-place in the midst of His own chosen nation, was thereby educated to realise the unity and the personality of God in a way that could not then have been otherwise possible. And thus he was not the less, but the better, enabled to feel and know that 'heaven and the heaven of heavens could not contain' the LORD, how much less then this house! That the fact was so, we see from the whole tenor of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, when, in the midst of the pomp and splendour of the assembled nation, the king, raised on a brazen scaffold near the altar, 'kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands to heaven,' and in the name of his people renewed the national covenant with the LORD God of Israel, and received His ratification of it in the 'cloud that filled the house of the LORD.' Other recognitions of that covenant occur to the mind as it transports itself into the past: we may picture to ourselves the triumphal return of the Jewish army from the field of Berachah, when 'they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehosaphat in the forefront of them, to go again

to Jerusalem with joy;' 'and they came to Jerusalem with psalteries, and harps, and trumpets, into the house of the LORD,' to celebrate with praise and thanksgiving their victory over the far stronger forces of a general gathering of the Moabites, Ammonites, and other shepherd nations, whose invasions have been in all ages so terrible to a civilised country—a victory which even the neighbouring kings recognised as the work of the LORD, whose covenant with Israel both king and people had so earnestly pleaded before the battle: or we may see before us another time when the temple courts were again filled with armed men, not the splendid retinue of a peaceful monarch, nor the troops of one just returned from the war, but veteran soldiers, loyal nobles, and patriotic Levites, secretly assembled from distant parts of the country, and resolved at all hazards to restore the constitution subverted by the usurping murtheress Athaliah, and to maintain the rights of the little child of seven years old who 'stood in the midst of them at his pillar, as the manner was,' while 'they put upon him the crown and gave him the testimony, and made him king, and Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king,' and then renewed for themselves, the people, and the king, the covenant which had thus once more been upheld in the person of the only remaining, only unmurdered, son of the line of David. And then, recalled by our text to 'the year in which king Uzziah died,' we think of the scene which these same courts had witnessed shortly before, not of the ratification, but of the breach of the national covenant, when Uzziah, the man of his age, the very representative of the worldly spirit, the religious formalism, and the material energy and prosperity of the nation, had ('because he was strong, and his heart was lifted up to his destruction') intruded himself into the sanctuary to burn incense, and the bold remonstrance and resistance of the priests had been supported and enforced by his being suddenly 'smitten of the LORD' with leprosy. For the meaning of Uzziah's act is plain: the co-ordinate offices of priest and king, and their exercise by separate persons, is a standing witness for the majesty of a present, though invisible, LORD, greater than both, and actually directing both, according to one divine law. Wherefore this spiritual independence is felt and understood to

be according to reason by every nation which realises its relation to its divine Head ; but owing to the fallibility of all human agents, it produces so many apparent anomalies and real inconveniences in practice, and often interferes so greatly with the smooth working of the state-machine, that it seems a thing which it would be well to get rid of, whenever that relation is forgotten in the absorbing care for the material prosperity of the people. Nor can we doubt what Isaiah himself thought of all these things, for the depths of his more than poet's and patriot's aspirations are still open for every one that will to read.

Perhaps on this occasion, as certainly on many others, Isaiah had been joining in the public daily sacrifice and worship, and had afterwards brought his own free-willing offering — a bullock or a lamb without blemish. Such an offering, the symbol of his dedication of himself to God's service, would be the natural expression of his earnest desire for some token that it was at last permitted him to enter on the actual functions of that prophetic office for which he had been so long preparing ; and that this vision was the answer to such heartfelt prayerful desire — itself an inspiration from on high — we may well believe.

The notion that it is a poetic fiction by which Isaiah represents, as in an allegory, the commencement of his career as a prophet, is plainly a mere expedient of writers who cannot conceive, or believe in, any fact which transcends their individual experience. Thus the critics of the last century supposed the gods and goddesses in Homer to be an ingenious 'machinery for the conduct of the piece,' exactly like that of the sylphs and gnomes in the 'Rape of the Lock,' and with no more reality to the poet's own mind ; and the rational philosophers and serious Christians fancied themselves required to quibble away the admonitions of Socrates to his disciples, to adhere to the actual worship of Apollo, or Eros, or Esculapius, before either the wisdom or the virtue of the sage could be safely or consistently approved : but in the present day, we are beginning again to understand the force of St. Paul's words when he told the Athenians that their poets and philosophers had, in their ignorant way, been trying to feel after and to find a divine Lord, of whose presence they were daily conscious, and whose

offspring they believed themselves to be. Isaiah might probably have said, as St. Paul did on a like occasion, 'Whether I was in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell,' but he would undoubtedly have confirmed the plain meaning of his words, that the vision was a reality and a fact; nor does he, in using those words, adopt a language essentially different from that which has been employed by wise and good men — neither fanatics nor impostors — in all countries and ages down to this we live in, to describe like inward experiences. Thus Wordsworth, who, like every other great teacher, is at once the expounder of truths for all times, and the thorough man of his own, after describing his other endowments as a poet, speaks of

' Another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood
In which the burden and the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: — that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until the breath of this corporeal frame,
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.'

Let us thoughtfully bring before ourselves the youthful Hebrew seer, with his vigorous and cultivated imagination, his piety and faith towards God, and his longing to enter on the service of his country in that ministry to which he had dedicated himself: let us consider the long mental discipline, the conflicts of soul, the hope and despair, the watching, the fasting, and the prayer, which alone could have formed such a man as the prophet Isaiah actually comes before us in each page of his writings: let us think of the 'burden and the mystery' which must have oppressed his spirit when he looked on the wealth and prosperity around him, and thought how glorious his country might be, yet how plainly it was going forward to the ruin which his study of past history and of the warnings by

Moses, and his successors the prophets, told him was now ready to fall on this corrupt and sense-bound generation: let us enter into his heart's desire to save them, if it were yet possible, by recalling them to the knowledge of their invisible LORD and King, whose holy covenant and service they had forsaken; and then into the sickness and despair which would replace that hope, when he thought of the men whom he had just seen assisting at the sacrifices with 'hands full of blood,' 'the show of their countenances witnessing against them,' while the very stones of the pavement seemed ready to cry out, in God's name, 'Tread my courts no more:' let us remember how he felt and knew that he too was bound by the same evil nature and circumstances as these his countrymen; how he must have been overwhelmed with the sense of what a work he was proposing to engage in, and how utterly beyond his or any human strength it was; and how sustained, while overwhelmed, by the still deeper sense that there was a Power sufficient even for these things:—and then we shall find in the above-quoted calm and rational description of the experience of an Englishman of the nineteenth century, an explanation and illustration of the greater part at least of what not only may, but must, have been the mental and bodily state of the Hebrew prophet, when he 'saw the LORD sitting on a throne.' The partly psychical, partly physical phenomena involved in this class of questions, may have to wait another generation before their turn arrives for that scientific investigation and solution which in every department of fact and thought is superseding the inaccurate theoretical scepticism of the last century: we need an exact analysis of that intensified and exalted condition of the human mind which has given us language in one age, mythology in another, prophecy in another, and which still yields philosophy and poetry at least to us moderns; and of that *life* of the body which must be the seat of hearing, sight, and our other senses; which seems to assert an independent existence for itself and for the soul in dreams*; and which may be able in other modes to

* "Reasoning operations may be conducted in sleep. Mathematicians have, in their slumbers, solved problems which posed them when awake. The great mathematician, Condillac, was sometimes enabled in his sleep to bring to a satisfactory conclusion speculations which, in the day, were incomplete.

act without the help of those material organs which remain to the corpse on the dissecting-table, but give it no sensations. Yet if we must be content with the faith that our children will have a light not given to us in these things, we shall, I think, find that here, as in so much else, we may—if we will only clearly state to our own minds the question which we know we cannot completely answer—get a kind and degree of knowledge well worth having. For we shall perceive that we are under no necessity to resort to rabbinical or quasi-rabbinical figments in support of the reality of Isaiah's vision, nor to neological devices for getting rid of it: we shall be at least in a position to see that there is nothing monstrous in the fact, nor irrational in the belief, of a vision such as the prophet here describes; and that we have not here one of those prodigies which superstition delights in, and true no less than false philosophy recoils from, but an event solemn and wonderful indeed, yet having a more matter of fact reality, and a higher interest, to him who seeks to have a reason for his faith than to any other man.

But while we thus recognise the prophet's mental state to have been a calm, rational, orderly, human state, we must remember that our Christian faith—nay, our reason, when illumined by faith—forbids us to conceive of this vision as a mere projection of that mental state, and of the seer as beholding only what his own imagination had first created. Everything shows how thoroughly Isaiah was prepared to become the recipient of a communication from on high, but we are not therefore to be content to think that after all there was no actual communication, but only the supposition of it, which would do as well. Get a real personal knowledge of the messenger (and you must get this, not from commentators and

Cabanis tells us that Franklin so often formed correct and highly important conceptions of persons and political events in his sleep, as to have been inclined to view his dreams with superstitious reverence, while the real fact was, says Cabanis, that the philosopher's acute and sagacious intellect was operating even in his sleep. . . . Cases are on record of judges who, in their sleep, have delivered decisions of the weightiest kind; and of poets who, in that state, have composed verses of great power and beauty, though they were by no means exempt from a certain degree of mystical indistinctness." — *Sleep and Dreams*, by J. A. Symonds, M.D. pp. 54, 62, where the reader will find much more, illustrative of the point we are considering.

critics, but from hearty study of his own words), and then you will be better able to understand the message — the revelation — which God has employed that man to take to his brethren: for though God can and does speak through instruments unconscious of his designs, — a Cæsar or a Napoleon, a whirlwind or an earthquake, — yet when He would lead us into the knowledge of Himself, and of His wisdom and love towards us, He speaks only through men whom He has first qualified themselves to understand and appreciate the good tidings they bear. But our reason will indeed have become folly, if we deduce from the complete qualifications of the messenger, that he has no message; from the perfect adaptation of the means to the end, that there is no end. If we will be rational, no less than if we will be Christian, we must steadily recognise the reality — the objective, independent reality — of that communication which Isaiah was thus qualified to become the recipient of. *How* this could be, *how* God reveals his mind and will to men, *how* the poetic or other human faculty gives form and expression to truths not imagined nor discovered, but communicated from on high, — this can never be *explained*: an explanation is a contradiction in terms, an assertion that the Infinite is definable, that the Superhuman is subject to the laws, and expressible in terms, of the human. Let the understanding attempt to comprehend the Divine, and that which it has in its grasp inevitably proves not to be the thing inquired for. We must, and well may, be content to know that God has revealed Himself to man, and thankful that man is capable of receiving and benefiting by, though not of defining, that revelation.

The throng of formal worshippers would have left the temple; the voices of the choirs of singers ‘clothed in white linen,’ and chanting in alternate parts

‘O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good,
For His mercy endureth for ever,’

or some other appointed psalm, would have died into silence; and if other devout Israelites were praying apart, if the white-robed priest was silently presenting their prayers in the fragrant cloud of incense which rose from the golden altar in the holy place, the stillness and solemnity of the scene would be thereby

heightened rather than disturbed. Then the vail of the temple was withdrawn, and the holy of holies discovered to the prophet's eyes; and he saw the Lord sitting as a king upon his throne, actually governing and judging. His train, the symbol of dignity and glory, filled the holy place; while around Him hovered the attendant seraphim, spirits of purity, zeal, and love, chanting in alternate choirs the holiness of their Lord: the threshold vibrated with the sound, and the 'white cloud' of the divine presence, as if descending to mingle itself with the ascending incense of prayer, filled the house. The eternal archetypes of the Hebrew's symbolic worship were revealed to Isaiah; and as the centre of them all his eyes saw the King, the LORD of Hosts, of whom the actual rulers from David to Uzziah had been but the temporary and subordinate viceroys. In that presence, even the spirits of fire, which consumes all impurities while none can mix with it, cover their faces and their feet, conscious that they are not pure in God's sight, but justly chargeable with imperfection: and much more does Isaiah shrink from the aspiring thoughts he had hitherto entertained of his fitness to be the preacher of that God to his countrymen, — he a man of unclean lips, sharing the uncleanness of the people among whom he dwells. In utter self-abasement he realises the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the utter separation it makes between man and the holy God.

Whether we take this chapter to be the first in actual date or no, it is the key to the whole Book; and the announcement which it makes of the HOLINESS of the LORD is the key to the chapter. This vision in the temple was to Isaiah what that of the burning bush was to Moses. That God has made a covenant with the nation, a true 'original social contract' between king and people, and of the people among themselves; that each member of the nation is personally responsible for the breach of that covenant; that the holiness and righteousness of God make it absolutely certain that He will enforce it, at whatever cost to the guilty parties; yet that the same righteousness causes Him to hold the contract binding on Himself as well as them; and that therefore He has provided a way of reconciliation between them and Himself through the sacrifice of that which separates them; — this was what was revealed to Moses, and

became the ground-work of the whole Hebrew polity. And now that a long course of worldly growth and progress had almost obliterated this, the old fundamental faith of the nation, the same revelation is renewed to Isaiah when he is to be sent forth as the restorer of what Moses originally established. Every nation arrives from time to time at some crisis, when it must either lose all that it has hitherto gained, and so depart from its place among the nations, or else must shake off the evil, and with renewed strength go forward in its appointed course. And such a crisis had the Jewish nation come to in the time of Isaiah. He was to be God's main though not only instrument for carrying her through the struggle; he is, therefore, first made to know his own utter insufficiency, and then to realise the sufficiency which comes from God alone. He was a circumcised Jew, a member of the holy, separated, covenanted nation, accustomed to seek purification from the stains of conduct in the rites of the law, and able to understand how those rites were morally efficacious when God accepted the sacrifice of the selfish will by the man of contrite heart. But now the exceeding sinfulness of sin itself, of his nature not of his acts, was discovered to him; and he needed the fire from the altar to be applied to his own lips, and not to the bullock or the goat he might have brought for sacrifice, and by God's own ministry, and not by the earthly priest: and this was done as a sacramental and efficacious pledge that he had now received that inmost purification which is the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire.* 'Fire,' says Vitrina, 'is something pure, burning, purifying; it lays hold of, penetrates, and, as it were, converts into its own substance whatever is susceptible of its action, thus hallowing the gifts laid on the altar. All these are the attributes of the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to purge and illuminate man, to excite him to the love of God, to affect him with zeal for His glory, to arouse him from sloth to fervour, to inflame him with courage and constancy, with energy and devotion of all his powers to the cause of God, and to enable him to make supplications to God according to His will. And in this place fire signifies the spirit of prophecy, which spirit, like fire, sanctifies men in a peculiar

* Compare St. Paul's conversion, Acts, ix.

manner to this great work, kindles, inflames, makes them glow with zeal; and, what is true in itself and specially applicable here, converts them into seraphs.' God desired a willing messenger; therefore He does not command Isaiah to take on him the office, but gives him opportunity to do so if he be willing. And the prophet, now filled with the Holy Ghost, and feeling that in that power he is made holy, immediately proposes himself as ready to accept the commission.

It has been, and is still discussed, whether, in the words 'Who will go *for us*?' as in the like use of the plural pronoun in other places in the Old Testament, there is a reference to the Trinity; or whether the phrase is 'merely the plural of majesty,' or some other idiom. There is something opposed to all our present habits of thought and criticism in the notion that a word of this kind can be made to prove a dogma; yet to the mind which recognises a deeper meaning in words than the merely grammatical, the latter explanation will seem a very poor substitute for the old dogmatic interpretation. It would be better to ask what is the origin of the 'plural of majesty.' Majesty, or *greatness*, is the attribute of the personal head of a body, not that of a solitary individual. *I* is the word of mere will, good or evil; *we*, that of counsel, fellowship, and co-operation; and the plural of the latter expresses a higher unity than the singular of the former. There is a higher unity in the marriage of man and wife than in the single half-existence of either separately, and in the Godhead which is the object of the Christian's faith than in the solitary Being whom the Mahometan or the Unitarian worships. 'The first cause,' says Aristotle, 'is the last in discovery.' When it is at last revealed, we can look back and trace its workings in forms where it could not have been recognised at the time. And thus we, by the fulness of the light of the Gospel, can see in the language which combines the plural Elohim with the singular Jehovah, the preludings of that revelation of the Trinity in Unity, which the spirit of man was not yet educated to receive in its spiritual meaning, and the formal announcement of which could, therefore, have only confirmed and perpetuated his natural proneness to polytheism.

The prophet is 'sent,' has a commission. This seems to be primarily and properly implied in the Hebrew words which we

translate 'prophet' and 'prophesy.' The Jew understood him to be 'one who spoke not his own words, but those of another,' as Philo says; one who was sent from God as His ambassador and interpreter:—as is evident from the (on this point) classical passage, Exodus, vii. 1., where God says to Moses, *I make thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.* The verb, too, is always used in the passive voice, in the Hebrew, to imply the same idea.*

'To hear and not understand, to see and not perceive,' is used by Demosthenes as a proverb. It is here the expression of the sternest irony; first as addressed to the people themselves, and then to the prophet, in reference to the effect of his preaching. As though the LORD had said, 'You are warned; disobey the warning, and take the consequences.' It is the *will* in men which believes and obeys, or hardens itself and rebels. Believing and obeying, God blesses it with ever-increasing light and power; but if it refuses this light and power to walk in God's way, God does not permit it to retain these for its merely worldly and selfish purposes.† We not only may, but must, reject all those notions of God's character (sometimes called Calvinistic, and with which it cannot be denied that Calvin did at times discolour his noble Christian faith) which make Him out to be a Being of mere arbitrary power, or with His attributes of wisdom, righteousness, and love, all limited by a lower than human caprice. But while we refuse to hear such a doctrine of devils, though an angel from heaven should preach it to us, let us also beware not to fall into the error, equally false, and equally pernicious, of bringing God's justice and

* Gesenius, *Lexicon*, words נִבֵּן and נִבְּן, under the former of which he mentions the like usage of the Latin deponent verbs, to express the same class of notions: as, *loqui, fari, vaticinari*, &c. See, too, Ewald, *Die Propheten*, i, 6., to the like effect.

† "But when we in our viciousness grow hard,
O misery on't! the wise gods seal our eyes;
In our own filth drop our clear judgments; make us
Adore our errors; laugh at us while we strut
To our confusion."

Antony and Cleopatra, iii. 11.

Quoted by Mr. Trench, *Notes on the Parables*, p. 12., where the reader will find some instructive observations on this subject.

goodness down to the debased standard of worldly and sensual men, and of allowing ourselves to assume that it would be either just or merciful in God to permit men to go on indefinitely in sin. There is nothing but the irreconcilable contrariety between good and evil, holiness and sin, and the triumph of the former at any cost, to prevent our eventually arriving at that reign of power without justice, will without love, intellect without heart, which we may condemn in the form of 'Calvinism,' but to which we are continually tending, when we suspect it not, and are only brought back by God's judgment upon sinners; — that reign in which the only God would be the devil.*

And if it were anywhere necessary thus to assert God's righteousness against sin, most especially was it so in this the chosen nation of Israel. Israel had been set apart, that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and if he became reprobate, where were this promise to the world?—'If gold rusteth, what should iron do?' Therefore the cities were to be wasted without inhabitant, and the land utterly desolate; and even after a partial recovery from this punishment, and a humble restoration of a small part of their ancient glory, the stern process should be repeated again and again: the invasion of Pekah and Rezin would be repaired only to be followed by that of Sennacherib; the captivity of Manasseh would succeed the peaceful reign of Hezekiah; Josiah would restore the kingdom only to be laid waste by the Egyptian and the Assyrian; the Roman would come after the Greek, and even Hadrian after Titus. All thought of an earthly glory of the nation must give way before such a prospect. If the prophet looked forward with a patriot's hopes alone, there was nothing but humiliation and despair before him; he could at most expect but such temporary alleviation and restoration as might enable him to do his work while he was there. No doubt—we shall come upon the proofs immediately—the prophet did not in the earlier years of his ministry take this view of the meaning of the promise with which the divine commission concludes; but still trusted that the holy seed, the substance of the nation,

* I need hardly remind the reader of Southey's picture of what such a reign would be;—the *Curse of Kehama*.

would spring up again, even in his own day, and Israel be restored to more than its pristine prosperity and power among the nations, as well as to its first and pure faith in its LORD. And when the terrible truth did at last become clear to him, he had been prepared to understand, and to declare to his own people, and to mankind, what more than adequate compensation was still behind.

I have followed what seems the more probable meaning of verse 13., yet venture to observe that our Version makes a satisfactory sense, if we understand an allusion (by one of those poetical transitions which characterise Isaiah's strong imagination) to the tithes, the sacred portion of the produce of the land, and to their being duly gathered in and eaten by those to whom they pertained, and not to any wasteful consumption of them. Whether the concluding image of the teil (or terebinth) and the oak trees, is that of their casting their leaves, or of their being cut down, like the tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, is uncertain. In either case the idea of the life subsisting under the apparent death is the same.

CHAPTER VI.

ISAIAH, VII.—THE ACCESSION OF AHAZ.—POLITICAL STATE OF KING AND PEOPLE.—‘THE LORD SAID.’—TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM.—THE VIRGIN CONCEIVING.—THE INCARNATION AN UNIVERSAL IDEA—HOW REALISED.—LOSS OF HEBREW INDEPENDENCE.—ISAIAH NOT A MAGICIAN.

THE next, and following prophecies, to the end of chapter xvi., belong, with more or less clearness, to the reign of Ahaz. The ‘And’ with which the narrative opens here, and in chapter viii., seems among the indications that the book has been arranged as a continuous whole; perhaps we might say the same of the beginning of chapter ii.

The reign of Jotham was characterised (as I have already observed) by the same material prosperity and order, internal and external, political and religious, as that of his father Uzziah: the difference (not easily perceptible at the time) will have been that a new generation was grown up, enervated by peace and luxury, and trusting as a matter of course to old traditional routine, when they were on the eve of events to which it would be as inapplicable as that of the Austrians and Prussians, in the generation after that of Frederic the Great, was to meet the young enthusiasm of the French under Napoleon.

The three narratives of these events—that before us, and those in the books of Kings and Chronicles—present those discrepancies which, however troublesome to reconcile, are just such as men accustomed to jostle with facts in police-courts or jury-boxes consider among the proofs that they are hearing a true story, and not a forgery; but which some book-students (whose critical canons are quite other than those of the Niebuhrs, Grotes, or Arnolds) take for indications of ignorance or fraud, and throw aside accordingly. But there is little real difficulty, if we follow those commentators who combine the various accounts thus:—

In the last years of Jotham’s reign, Pekah king of Israel, and

Rezin, king of Syria, made an alliance against Judah ; and the accession of the weak youth Ahaz gave them a favourable opportunity for their purpose. A great battle annihilated the old army of Uzziah (as that of Jena did the army of Frederic); the invaders plundered and wasted the whole country, and carried off a great multitude of men, women, and children, of whom the share of the Syrians was sold into slavery at Damascus, while that of the Ephraimites was sent back by the intervention of the prophet Obed, who recognised, and induced his countrymen to recognise, a bond and claim of brotherhood in the common blood and faith which their national enmities had lost sight of. Up to the falling of this unexpected blow, Ahaz, and his princes and people, no doubt retained the insolent self-confidence denounced by Isaiah in the previous chapters: but now their scoffing demand, that ‘the LORD would hasten His work that they might see it,’ had been granted; and when they heard that the allies were preparing for a second invasion, of which the object was, not merely the reaping another year’s harvest of plunder, but also the taking of Jerusalem, the deposition of the house of David, and the permanent subjection of the kingdom under a viceroy or tributary king, like those whom Sennacherib, in his lately deciphered annals, says he set up in Chaldæa, Phœnicia, and Philistia, after conquering those countries*;—then the people and their rulers were panic-struck; ‘and their hearts were moved, as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind.’ We may then understand by ‘Syria resteth upon Ephraim,’ either ‘has renewed the old alliance,’ which, considering the disorganised and half-barbarised state of these petty governments, was likely enough to have been only made for single campaigns; or else ‘has encamped on the territory of Ephraim,’ as if preparing for a fresh march into Judæa. The scornful phrase, ‘the two smoking tails of firebrands,’

* One of these, Tubaal, is conjectured by Colonel Rawlinson (*Outline of the History of Assyria*, p. 22.) to have been the son of the man here mentioned. This may seem fanciful; but if the name stands good, we have a somewhat parallel case in the way in which Merodach Baladan appears, in the same annals, to have been king and fugitive alternately. There were no doubt particular chieftains and clans more powerful and aspiring than others, in the series of barbarous irruptions which now broke from the North.

seems to imply that they had already been wasting the country, and that the prophet foresaw that their power was just extinct : and if the main calamities of Pekah and Rezin's invasion had occurred after this prophecy was delivered, the discrepancy between its promises and their fulfilment would have been so great, that it is difficult to understand how it should have been preserved as authentic, for Isaiah himself would have doubted its entirely genuine inspiration. The improbability of Ahaz having any fears till after the destruction of his army has been already mentioned.

Let the reader form a distinct image, from the narratives, of the position of Jerusalem and its people at this juncture, and he will see its exact correspondence with that described in chapter i.

There is a singular pathos, as well as force, in the phrase 'the house of David,' in this place. David had succeeded in uniting the ancient factions of Israel and Judah into one strong monarchy* : when it was told him that the kings of the earth were gathering themselves together against him, he felt no fear, but went forth at the head of his armies, and in the name of the LORD destroyed them ; and among other nations whom he thus reduced, were the Syrians of Damascus, whose capital he garrisoned, and made themselves tributary. And now, the house of David had not only long lost the tribes of Israel, but was trembling for its own existence, threatened by those tribes, who had already almost annihilated Judah 'in a rage that reached up to heaven,' and were now returning in confederacy with this very Syria to a new attack. And the faith no less than the might of David had departed from him who sat in David's throne : Ahaz had no trust in the LORD of the nation, and therefore his heart was moved, and he called on Assyria and Assyria's gods to help him.

'Then said the Lord unto Isaiah'—not by some miraculous communication, alien from all human experience, and of which neither the reality nor the worth is proved by saying that Isaiah's writings are a part of the Bible ; but by that inward and spiritual command which is daily and hourly telling each of us what is our work, and how we are to do

* 2 Sam. v. 1—5.

it. Luther, in his Commentary on Genesis, in the midst of statements which show that he had no doubts of the occurrence of miracles either in his own or any other age, makes singular efforts to give a non-miraculous character to the expression ‘the LORD said;’ explaining that it was Adam who spoke to Eve, Shem to Abraham, and so on. The great preacher of the Word felt and knew that the mightiest, divinest, presence and power of the Holy Spirit, manifested itself through properly human discourse, and not by some voice in the air. When it is taught and received for orthodox that God only revealed Himself to men in former times by certain occasional and external miracles, and that our knowledge of Him is limited to what has been written down of such communications, we have reason to fear that we have too little sense that God is always actively present with us now, and to suspect that our belief is mechanical, and sceptical and superstitious at once. A Luther, or even a Cromwell, would have shrunk from dishonouring the Spirit of God within him, by supposing that it was not by the same wisdom and the same power as inspired Isaiah, that he spoke and acted in the Diet of Worms, or on the field of Dunbar.

Ancient topography is so often obscure, even when learned men get to the spot with their books in their hands, that perhaps it ought not to seem strange that it is yet disputed whether the ‘highway of the Fuller’s Field’ was on the west or the north of the city. For the former, Dr. Robinson quotes an authority of the middle ages, who speaks of a ‘gate of the Fuller’s Field’ in the west wall; while he thinks, also, that no where else can the ‘upper pool of Gihon’ be well placed: for the latter, Mr. Williams (also an investigator of the actual localities), observes that Josephus says, the ‘Fuller’s monument’ was on the north side of the city, where also was the traditional site of the ‘camp of the Assyrians,’ which seems to point to Rab-shakeh’s army; and he gives his own explanation of the water. I am not competent to judge between these learned writers, and those who have sided with each. But for reasons which I shall give when we come to Hezekiah’s preparations for the expected siege of Sennacherib, the latter supposition enables me to form and to present to the reader a more coherent notion of what must

have taken place on the various occasions in which we require a picture — if only a fancy one — of the Jerusalem of that day; and I, therefore, assume the highway of the ‘Fuller’s Field’ to have been outside the northern gate which opened into the road to Samaria, and by which (as we see from chapter x. 28—32.), an army marching on Jerusalem might be expected.

Isaiah, like the other prophets, taught not only by verbal discourse, but also by symbolical acts, which, especially in those times, gave a life and force to the former which it would not have had by itself. Accordingly he now takes with him his son Shear-jashub (‘a remnant shall return’), who was not improbably born during the grief and terror of the late invasion (in which Isaiah may himself have lost other children or relations), and was thus named as a sign to the people.* He finds Ahaz, no doubt accompanied, in oriental fashion, by a throng of people, just outside the wall of the city, examining the state of the fortifications, and of the reservoirs which, fed by the brook Gihon, were situated in that quarter, and which it was now necessary to provide for the defence of, that they might neither be available to the expected besiegers, nor cut off by them from supplying the city. The fullers had their works there, for the convenience of the water, and the causeway which led to their fulling ground was a convenient place for the purposes of both Ahaz and Isaiah, just as it suited Rab-shakeh† when it was his object both to reconnoitre the ground for a siege, and also to harangue the people on the walls.

Hitherto we have known the prophet as a writer, and through his writings; now he comes before us as a speaker. The present and following chapters are much more like a report of actual speeches than the first five chapters; and the narrative and oration together give us a lively picture of how Isaiah did speak, or preach, there in Jerusalem.

Isaiah tells Ahaz not to fear any further mischief from these two firebrands, now all but burnt out: each prides himself in his nation and city, and in himself as the head of these, but the LORD God laughs them to scorn, and decrees that their policy shall not stand nor come to pass, but that they themselves shall be

* Compare chap. viii. 18.

† Chap. xxxvi. 2.

broken instead, and be no more nations. Yet to this prediction of the overthrow of the invaders of Judah, he adds, that Judah, too, shall likewise perish if it repents not: ‘If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.’ The reader will find in Dr. Alexander, and other commentators, the various attempts which have been made to clear up the obscure parallelism of verses 8 and 9., and the still greater obscurity of the date ‘sixty-five.’ The latter cannot be proved either to agree or to disagree with history, unless we could first fix the exact year of this prediction, and also of the event to which it refers; and as this has not yet been done, it will be more convenient to take another opportunity of considering these specific dates in Hebrew prophecy.

Ahaz heard in sullen and incredulous silence; and the prophet resumes,—

Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God;
Ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

But Ahaz, who looked on the LORD not as his God, but only (like any of his heathen neighbours) as the god of Judæa, and as such inferior to the god of Assyria; and who had determined to apply to the king of Assyria, or perhaps had already applied to him, as a more trustworthy helper than the LORD, in the present strait; declines to ask a sign, excusing himself by a canting use of the words of Moses, ‘Thou shall not tempt the LORD.’ He refused the sign, because he knew it would confirm the still struggling voice of his conscience; and that voice he had resolved not to obey, since it bid him give up the Assyrian, and trust in the LORD henceforth.

The question whether Isaiah could have performed a miracle, if Ahaz had taken him at his word, the reader will find discussed hereafter: only I would here observe that if Isaiah, or those who recorded for him the present prophecy, had been influenced by that notion of the value of miracles of which I have spoken above, and which, however orthodox it may call itself, is repudiated by Christ and his Apostles, the narrative before us would hardly have been given in its present shape, in which the promise of ‘the virgin conceiving’ is treated as a far higher sign than any which could be exhibited in the

depths of earth or height of heaven. A comparison with Exod. iii. 12., and Isaiah, xxxvii. 30., throws some light upon the use of the word 'sign' in the present instance, and upon the mental state of the speaker and hearers which could recognise a propriety in a sign of which the force was only to be seen after the event. There may seem little difficulty in the whole passage to those who are content to 'take for granted' that it has some good meaning, and to express this feeling in the accustomed formula that 'the words are a prophecy of Christ;' but he who tries to discover what the meaning really is—what 'a prophecy of Christ' means—will find need for further examination. To believe in a person, is to trust him because we know and love him; but to believe a narrative, an argument, or a prophecy, about him, is to understand it. And to understand the passage before us, we must understand what manner of man the speaker was; what he was actually saying, and meaning; what import his words had to those who heard him; what import they have to us. We must, if possible, bridge over the gulf of apparently unknown depth and width which separates us from Isaiah, as he stood that day 'at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field.'

The help which I pretend to offer the reader is slight and imperfect enough; nothing more than some hints of a method which I can follow out but a little way, though I believe it to be the true method, which in abler hands will lead to more important results. But if we cannot solve our difficulties it is something to know precisely what they are, and to state them to ourselves clearly.

The original shows, I think, what indeed is sufficiently apparent in the most modern and accurate versions, that, on the refusal of Ahaz to ask a sign of the LORD's faithfulness to His people, Isaiah breaks into an apostrophe—the utterance at once of an orator and a poet—in which the speaker is carried forward by the power of a mental impulse, which for the time controls him, rather than he it. No one who has listened to a great orator, or even read the words of an impassioned writer like Burke or Carlyle, can be wholly unaware that the one and the other is, for the time, possessed and mastered by such a power;—a power which heathens

have continually recognised as spiritual and divine, and which we have been too much deterred from so acknowledging, because we see it employed for bad as well as for good ends, and forget that no where in the world of nature is this mysterious mixture of good and evil absent. And this elevated, ecstatic frame of the orator, as of the poet, is still more marked among southern and eastern nations. I am told that Mazzini's denunciations of the oppressor, and predictions of his country's future social and political regeneration, are at times uttered by him with an inconceivable fervour, rising into the tone of song rather than of mere eloquence. The reader's own observation and experience will supply him with other illustrations, sufficient to enable him to realise this characteristic of the prophet — that he was an orator, whose oratory was of the noblest kind, for manner no less than matter; and that, consequently, as often as his love of his country and his zeal for his God raised him to the height of some great argument, his words necessarily became, and in the present instance manifestly are, the expression of thoughts and feelings which pass beyond the limits which, in a cooler moment, perhaps only the moment before or after, his senses and logical faculty would have imposed upon them. The thoughts and feelings were really his, and such as the whole culture of his soul, intellectual, moral, religious, had made it possible for them to be, yet such as nothing but an occasion like the present — and we have not yet considered the whole spiritual import of that occasion — could have called into expression. Isaiah had gone down to the Fuller's Field intending in his own mind to address the king in the words which we have in verses 4—9, and to support this address by such symbolic emphasis as an oriental people would feel at the sight of the child Shear-jashub. And it may already have occurred to him — or, if not, he took it as the fitting course immediately afterwards — to resolve, and publicly announce his resolution, to call his next child by a name which should tell all who heard it that the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria should be shortly taken away by the king of Assyria; and thus to offer this second, and yet unborn son, as a new sign to the king and people, like that already given them in Shear-jashub. But his spirit was stirred by the behaviour of Ahaz, first to offer any other sign the un-

believing king chose, and next, still indeed to couple his warnings and promises with a reference to the unborn child, but now in language not for that age but for all times: the vision rises before him, the bounds of time and place fade away, and he says;

Hear ye now, O house of David,
Is it a small thing for you to weary men,
But will ye weary my God also?
Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign:
See! the Virgin, with child and bearing a Son,
And she calls his name Immanuel.

These are the words of passion and ecstasy, and as such must be read, in order to take the first step towards understanding them. The discourse then sinks to a lower level, though with a partially renewed vehemence in verse 17.; and the rest of it is in the same tone as that with which Isaiah began at first, and with the same immediate reference to passing events.

If the words just quoted stood alone — that is, recorded as having been actually spoken, but existing in no real relation with any facts of other times and men,—we must either pronounce them simply miraculous, or else be content with whatever was most probable of the several explanations by which the so-called rationalist critics try and reduce them to ordinary dimensions, even though it were merely that of calling them the words of eastern hyperbole and exaggeration. But the case is otherwise: history tells us that a belief in, or expectation of, an Immanuel — or incarnate God — has prevailed in all times, and among all nations; and so strong was the vitality of this belief among the Greeks and Romans, that when the progress of intellect had made it impossible for them to retain it any longer in its old mythological forms, they revived it in the far more monstrous assertion of the divinity of the emperors; and Tacitus, Suetonius, and Virgil tell us of various other shapes in which it was presenting itself in their own times of scepticism and civilisation. Brahminism and Buddhism are witnesses of the same pervading instinct of mankind; and not less so is the reception of Christianity by every tribe of the human race, as something not foreign, but most congenial, to their religious —

that is, their deepest — wants and sympathies. This class of historical facts then are another set of materials, not less necessary to the understanding of our subject than those by which we endeavour to realise a prophet as an actual flesh and blood man, who took part in the politics and social interests of his time, just as we do now. A third class still remains, though even that will not exhaust the enquiry.

We are not Jews in the time of Isaiah, Greeks or Romans in the times of Virgil or Tacitus, nor is our knowledge of life and truth derived from India or Tibet. We are Englishmen and Christians, here in the nineteenth century, and we stand on a vantage-ground which enables us to see the relations of things, and, consequently, their meaning, in a way not otherwise possible. Reader, do you believe in Jesus Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary? Is that old creed the expression to and for you of a series of FACTS (not doctrines) at once historical, and in the inmost relation to your own spiritual and personal life and experience? If not, how can I continue to discuss our subject with you by that rational, scientific method, which to depart from is to write mere words without meaning? For non-acquaintance with these facts in a student of the Bible is what non-acquaintance with the existence of the stars and planets would be in astronomy, or that of mountains and rivers in geology. But let us take our stand on the *facts* of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; let us look for the *law* in the facts; and then we shall be able to examine all past history, and especially the history of the Hebrew nation, in the light of that law. It then appears that it was no fancy, but the assertion of a — or rather the — law of universal ethnology, which foretold that in the race of Abraham ‘all nations of the earth should be blessed.’ The Romans were called to embody and develope in their institutions the ideas of law, and of municipal and imperial government; the Greeks to instruct mankind in free inquiry, philosophy, and art; and every other tribe and people, which has not abandoned its duty by sinking into mere brute life, has contributed its larger or smaller waters to the great stream of human life and progress: the Hebrews were appointed to set forth and realise in their polity and literature the true relation of man to God, and — what the so-called rationalist with his recognition of the ‘religious senti-

ment' overlooks — the relation of God to man. He who has looked into his own heart, and there learnt that his religion, his faith, consists not in this religious sentiment, but in God's revelation and communication of Himself to him in His Son Jesus Christ, can then look around and behind him, and see that the same God did in past times reveal Himself in several and successive manifestations to and through this Hebrew nation. Their whole polity is seen to be a preparation for an universal society which is to spring out of it: their whole literature shapes itself to become a manual for that society: that fundamental idea which philosophers say lies at the root of every nation, and by which its multitude unconsciously, and its rulers and teachers with more or less perception of its presence, are age after age urged forward to their appointed goal, as by force of irresistible law, was in the Hebrews the idea of the coming of a LORD and King of mankind no less than of their own people. They could not have been fit for any of these ends if they had been less human, and if their polity had been less in harmony with the laws of man and the universe than the polities of the Greeks and Romans: it needed to be more in harmony, and it must have been more so in fact, for more has been able to survive, and pass into new and very diverse forms of society. But being fit for these, because the original laws and subsequent developments of their polity and literature lay in such near relation with the ultimate laws of human nature and society, they were thus also fitted — fitted by God who has created and governs the universe according to the counsel of His own will—to become the channel of God's revelation of Himself to all mankind. The question whether there actually is such a revelation in the Bible is a question of fact, and must be settled by each of us for himself, just as each settles for himself on the evidence of fact, and not of argument, whether there the sun gives light and heat to his body; but to those who have found such a revelation there, or who choose to assume it even for the pleasure of reasoning, it is plain that — Christ being the centre of the revelation — all that comes before Him will have a prophetic character. All nature, all humanity, must be prophetic, if it is progressive, and its progress the unfolding of the powers of a law inherent in it from the first: the philosophy of the Greeks, the municipalities

of the Romans, could be nothing to us now if they — that is, the law in them, and cause of their existing effects — had not *anticipated* all their present fruits; and even the warlike ambition, which brought the seeds of these, and many such things, into Britain or elsewhere, was a part of the same anticipatory working of the same law. And, therefore, much more is it evident, that reason and historical science require us to recognise the like workings in the growth of the Hebrew commonwealth and people, and in their relations to their Creator and their fellow-men. The evidence of the anticipation of a personal Messiah by the Hebrews from very early times, and of its continually acquiring a more distinct and positive character, is well known to the student of the Old Testament. But the prophecy of Micah, Isaiah's contemporary, has a special bearing on the subject; he says, —

‘But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah,
Though thou be little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler
in Israel;
Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.
Therefore will he give them up
Until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth:
Then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children
of Israel,
And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD,
In the majesty of the name of the LORD his God;
And they shall abide:
For now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.’*

Even if we should assume that one of these predictions was suggested by the other (though the differences indicate at least a partial independence), or suppose both to refer to some earlier prophecy, they are not the less indications of a national belief and expectation of a mysterious birth of the Messiah. Nor can we avoid connecting them with that most ancient tradition of ‘the seed of the woman’ on the one hand, and with that state of the national Jewish mind on the other, which is implied in the narratives of Matthew and Luke, who relate the incarnation

* Micah, v. 2, 3, 4.

of Jesus Christ as an event miraculous indeed, yet not contrary or alien from the ancient faith, but as the fulfilment of its deepest anticipations.

If, then, we comprehend these two sides of the case together: if we see on the one hand that Isaiah was an actual practical politician of the day in which he lived; and on the other that it is not the dogma of a worn-out superstition, but the assertion of the newest and most accurate philosophy, — the philosophy of positive science, — to say and believe with St. Peter, that ‘no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;’* — if we grasp these ideas at once, we shall, I think, have no insurmountable difficulty in the words of Isaiah which immediately follow, and in which he fuses into one image the birth of the Immanuel and that of his own child, and declares, in direct reference to the latter, that before he has learnt to distinguish good from evil (come to years of discretion, as we say), he shall be sharing the general prosperity — the old proverbial blessing† — of his native land, which before then shall have seen the land of her present invaders — spoken of as one, because its kings were confederate — itself laid waste, after having first lost both those kings. In about three years from this time, Tiglath-Pileser overthrew the kingdom of Syria, killed Rezin, carried away the Damascenes and Syrians into Assyria and Media‡: it is one of the newly opened questions whether

* 2 Peter, i. 20, 21. This passage (of which the Petrine spirit at least is not questioned); that in chapter i. 10, 11, 12. of the 1st Epistle; and Peter’s argument in Acts, ii. 22—36.; offer to him who will reflect on them, an important, perhaps I might say a complete light, on prophecy, both as it appeared to the genuine Hebrew mind, and as it is in itself, according to its philosophic idea. The simple, lowly-wise, fisherman, argues that the meaning of these words of David was not exhausted in their application to himself, they were not *fulfilled* in him; yet that they are not the words of hyperbole and bombast, but the utterances of a prophet, of one of those wise and good men whom God chooses from time to time to reveal his universal laws and plans by; and that therefore we must seek in history for the adequate fulfilment of them.

† Deut. xxvi. 9.; Josh. v. 6.

‡ 2 Kings, xvi. 9.

Samaria was not taken at the same time*; but at least we know that he took several cities in the north of Israel, and carried away the people of all the northern half of that kingdom; and that Pekah's own assassination by Hoshea, followed this devastation of his country.†

Isaiah has hardly uttered the promise of deliverance and restored prosperity, when he retracts it. The abrupt beginning of verse 17. seems to mark a pause, in which the national sin of Ahaz and his people, and the fact that they had already called in, or at least resolved to call in, the aid of Assyria, come back upon the prophet; and he goes on to foretel the beginning of calamities such as the nation had never yet known. With the exception of the temporary subjection of Rehoboam to Egypt, Judah had hitherto preserved its national independence: but from this application of Ahaz to Tiglath-Pileser was to date 'its transition to a servile state, from which,' observes Dr. Alexander, 'it was never permanently freed, the domination of Assyria being soon succeeded by that of Egypt, and this by that of Babylon, Persia, Syria, and Rome, the last ending only in the downfall of the state, and that general dispersion which continues to this day. The revolt of Hezekiah, and even longer intervals of liberty in later times, are mere interruptions of the customary and prevailing bondage.' Ahaz intended to 'hire' the Assyrian razor for his own purposes; but the LORD would employ the same instrument to execute His judgments; and in the consequent desolations of the land, that prophecy of the child eating milk and honey would indeed be fulfilled, but after another manner than its terms seemed at first to imply. If they had believed and trusted in the LORD for deliverance, they should have continued to eat the fat of the land; but now the cultivated fields should be laid waste, and their cultivators scattered by the sword or famine. Here and there a surviving inhabitant, who has saved a young cow and two sheep from the wreck of his property, shall feed upon the butter and milk they yield him, in an abundance which but mocks the general de-

* Rawlinson's *Outline of the History of Assyria*, p. 15. By the last accounts Colonel Rawlinson still suspends his judgment as to the identity or otherwise of Tiglath-Pileser, Shalmaneser, and Sargon.

† 2 Kings, xv. 29, 30.

solation: for their pastures are the hill-sides, heretofore so carefully terraced and worked by man's hand, while the well-stocked vineyards which once bore such a high price*, are turned into mere briers and thorns, where men go with arrows and with bows, to seek wild game, or to protect themselves from savage beasts or more savage men.

Bees may, or may not, abound as much in Assyria as flies in Egypt; but it does not seem a mere fancy of the commentators, who see a propriety in the fierceness and stings of the one, and the filth, buzzing, and comparative feebleness of the other.† The books of Kings and Chronicles say nothing of any intercourse, friendly or hostile, with Egypt in the reign of Ahaz; but as an alliance with this kingdom was a part of the policy of the statesmen of Hezekiah a few years later, it may have been under discussion now, or an application even may have been made to them as well as to Tiglath-Pileser. That the land of Judah was harassed, plundered, and overrun by the Assyrian armies, and the collectors of his tribute, in this and the next reigns, and not by the Egyptians, will not appear to detract from the substantial accuracy of Isaiah's words, if we have once cleared our minds of the superstitious and profane notion that he was a sort of magician and soothsayer, and employed by God as such; and can realize that he was a man of like heart and mind with

* The German vineyards are valued at so much a vine, and among them the vines of Johannisburg at a ducat each, according to J. D. Michaelis: those of Lebanon were rated at a piastre each in 1811, according to Burckhardt; and this latter sum Henderson calculates to be a half less than the price in the text, which was probably high in proportion to the value of money. A comparison, however, with Canticles, viii. 11, 12. might lead us to suppose the reference here also to the rent rather than the price. See Gesenius and Alexander on the verse.

†

Ἡὐτε ἔθνεα εἴσι μελισσῶν ἀδινάων,
πέτρης ἐκ γλαφυρῆς αἰεὶ νέον ἔρχομενάων*
βοτρυδὸν δὲ πέτονται ἐπ' ἀνθεσιν εἰαρινοῖσιν,
αἱ μὲν τ' ἔνθα ἅλις πεποτήσεται, αἱ δὲ τε ἔνθα
ὥς τῶν ἔθνεα πολλὰ νεῶν ἀπο καὶ κλισιάων, κ. τ. λ.

Hom. II. β, 87.

Ἡὐτε μυιάων ἀδινάων ἔθνεα πολλὰ,
αἵ τε κατὰ σταθμὸν ποιμνήϊον ἡλάσκουσιν,
ῥογὴ ἐν εἰαρινῇ, ὅτε τε γλάγος ἄγγεα δέυει' κ. τ. λ.

Ib. 469.

ourselves, — truly sent from God, yet not more truly than each of us must be, if he is to do any work, not worse than useless, in the world. We may hold this belief all the more consistently for believing also that the work of the prophets, and of the other Scripture writers, was different from that of any men before or since: — ‘If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?’

CHAPTER VII.

ISAIAH VIII.—IX. 7. THE SYMBOLICAL FAMILY.—ANCIENT AND MODERN HABITS OF PUBLIC MEN. — SILOAH AND EUPHRATES. — THE PANIC OF JUDAH, AND ITS REMEDY. — GALILEE OF THE GENTILES. — THE NATIONAL GLOOM. — THE GREAT LIGHT. — THE MESSIAH. — GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPHET'S ANTICIPATIONS.

WE have seen how Isaiah, during his late interview with Ahaz, was possessed by the idea of a child of his being a sign to the people of their deliverance from present invasion. In the first chapter of Hosea occurs a like instance of symbolic names given by a prophet to his children, and in Habakkuk, ii. 2. we have mention of the practice of writing a prophecy on a tablet in easily legible characters, and hanging it up in the temple, market-place, or other public resort; from a comparison with which the most modern commentators prefer to think that Isaiah now merely inscribed 'TO MAHER-SHALAL-HASH-BAZ,' on a metal or waxed tablet; — though it must not be overlooked that the direction to 'tie up and seal the testimony,' in verse 16., is in favour of the older version, which understands him to have made a record of his expectation of the birth of the child, and of the significance of that birth, at some length. He wrote 'with a man's pen,' or 'style,' — a phrase not unlike our 'common hand,' or 'popular style;' and he took as credible witnesses that the record had preceded the event, Uriah, the high priest at the time*, and Zechariah, who was not improbably the father-in-law of Ahaz, and a Levite.† He calls his wife 'the prophetess,' as the wife of a king is called a queen (says Vitringa), though she does not reign, and, in some old ecclesiastical canons, the wife of a bishop a bishopess, and of a presbyter, a presbytriss; and thus claims for her a place with her husband and children ‡ in the holy and symbolic family,

* 2 Kings, xvi. 10.

† 2 Kings, xviii. 2., 2 Chron. xxix. 1. 13.

‡ See verse 18. of this chapter.

who are for 'a sign in Israel.' She gave birth to a child, and his name was called, in accordance with the writing, 'Haste-plunder, Speed-spoil,' that the people might understand that before he was old enough to utter the words 'father' and 'mother,'—that is, within a short but somewhat indefinite period, such as we should express by 'in a year or two from his birth,'—the spoils of the plundered cities of Samaria and Damascus, the capitals of the nations now invading Judah, shall have been carried before the Assyrian conqueror in triumph. That the same child was also called 'Immanuel,' seems more in accordance with the text than the supposition that Immanuel was a third son, though the sense is intelligible either way.

In order to realize the practical impressiveness of such symbolic acts and names upon Isaiah's contemporaries, we must remember that Jerusalem was a very small town for size and population, compared with the notion we insensibly get of a capital, from our own vast London; and also, that there was as little in the ways of thinking and living of that age and country as in the extent of the city, to effect such a separation between a public man's political and personal life as exists in England. We respect the domestic reserve of our neighbours, and we fortify ourselves in the like reserve, by our habit of learning what they are doing that concerns us, through the newspaper which we read by our own fireside. Where there were no newspapers, and where the climate encouraged an out-of-door life, the people of Jerusalem would become as familiar with that personal demeanour of Isaiah in the market-place, or elsewhere, which he made a part of his public ministry, as we are with the mental habits and political conduct of Lord John Russell or Mr. Gladstone, though the greater part of us would recognise neither of them by sight, and still fewer know anything of their personal and private life.

After having uttered this prediction, and perhaps after an interval of time in which the political relations of the several states had become further developed, Isaiah proceeds to take a view of the whole Hebrew people, whom he looks on as one, notwithstanding the actual division and enmity of the two kingdoms. He sees Ephraim rejoicing, and Judah trembling, at the alliance of Rezin and Pekah; the one expecting that it will lead

to the overthrow of the feeble house of David, the other looking to Assyria as the only protection against that overthrow; but both agreeing in this, that their politics are wholly worldly, and have no reference to the government and help of the LORD of hosts, the true King of the whole Hebrew people, as indeed of the other nations from whom they hope or fear so much. The visible power of armies was to them far more real than the unseen help of the LORD which the prophet believed and asserted to be sufficient for those who would put their trust in Him and His covenant with the nation. The little brook of Siloah * might 'make glad the city of God' with its living and never-failing stream; but what was it in their eyes compared with the mighty river Euphrates, which, when it was swollen with the melted snows of Armenia — resembling the great king who recruited his countless armies in the like mountainous regions — yearly overflowed its banks, and covered the whole

* A rock-hewn reservoir under the south-west brow of Ophel, which is itself the south-eastern of the hills which form the site of Jerusalem, still bears the name of Siloah, and waters the gardens which still occupy the place of those 'king's gardens' for the irrigation of which it may have been first made. This reservoir is supplied by a conduit tunnelled through Ophel, from a larger reservoir now called the 'Fountain of the Virgin;' and thence the tunnelling penetrates under the site of Solomon's temple, as was proved when the Arabs in an insurrection got into the city by this channel. The water, which is distinguishable by its peculiar taste and look, as well as by its intermittent flow (which Jerome mentions), has been again identified in a bath on the north-west of the temple-site; and although more complete investigations have hitherto been prevented by Turkish jealousy, these facts would be enough to make it more than probable that there is hidden somewhere a living spring which supplies these existing uses. Among the military advantages of Jerusalem, Strabo states that it was well supplied with water, while there was utter drought beyond the walls; and Tacitus, more precisely, that it possessed a perennial fountain with subterranean channels. And from all these things we may conclude, with Mr. Fergusson, that this was the living fountain, the 'softly flowing' waters of which 'made glad the city of God;' and that the complicated channels through which it still passes under ground, were probably among those works of military engineering which Hezekiah executed (2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4.; Eccles. xlviii. 17.). The saying ascribed to Mahomet, that 'Zemzem (in Mecca) and Siloah are the two fountains of Paradise,' is worth quoting here. See Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, i. 493, ff.; Gesenius, *Commentar*, i. 276.; Kitto's *Physical Geography*, p. 411, ff.; Fergusson's *Topography of Jerusalem*, p. 69, ff.; and on Isaiah, xxii. below.

plain with its waters! Therefore, says Isaiah, this great river — this king of Assyria with all his hosts — shall the LORD bring upon this people and land. After breaking over Syria and Samaria, as successive dikes which hardly for a moment delay its course, it shall pass on to Judæa, filling the land with its floods, till the monarchy, and the nation it represents, shall be reduced to the near peril of a drowning man, whose neck the waters have reached: —

And the stretching out of his wings shall fill
The breadth of thy land, O Immanuel!

— ‘thy land shall be thus overflowed, O child, whom, notwithstanding, the LORD has set as a sign that He is present with us: therefore, however the deep waters may go over us, we will still trust in that LORD, and in the promise of which thou art the standing witness.’*

Trusting in this Name, Isaiah defies the confederacy of Ephraim and Syria, and the power of Assyria: their alliances, their warlike array, shall be broken; their counsels shall prove foolish; their resolutions and orders shall fail of execution; — ‘for God is with us.’ The exact force of the original can be apprehended by the English reader, though it can only be expressed — and that somewhat imperfectly — by the translation of the word ‘Immanuel’ here, and its retention above.

There was a general panic among the people; ‘their heart was moved as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind,’ when they heard that Syria was confederate with Ephraim; their cry was every where, ‘a confederacy† has been made against us, and we must meet it by a counter alliance with Assyria;’ and the prophet says, ‘I too should have fallen under the influence of this panic, if the LORD had not laid hold of me with a strong hand, to keep me in the way of dependence on Himself, and if He had not taught me to escape the fear which possessed

* “Ac si dixisset, terra nihilominus erit tua, O Immanuel.”—*Calvin in Alexander.*

† There is no difficulty from the original usually meaning a *treasonable* plot. Judah might reasonably apply such a term to an alliance of Israel with heathens against her, even if the feeling with which a nation must look on any alliance for its destruction, would not justify such an expression.

my countrymen, by making the LORD of hosts my fear, and my dread, by sanctifying Him Himself, as I now in His name call on you to do.' To sanctify* the LORD of hosts is in mind and in practice to recognise Him as the *holy* God, the Lord who is *absolute* (*absolutus*), free from limitations which hinder every other being from carrying his will into full operation: it is to believe with the whole heart that God can and does govern all things according to the counsel of His own will, that what He determines does certainly come to pass, however probabilities and appearances may be against the belief. He who thus sanctifies the LORD cannot fear any other power. Therefore Isaiah goes on, — 'Sanctify the LORD, and He shall be your sanctuary: ' recognise Him as your holy King, and He shall be a holy King to you, raising you to share in His own absolute dominion over all the powers of the world. He *is* your King, and you are entitled to claim this relationship; but if you deny it, He will not deny it also. If you renounce your rights, He will nevertheless require you to fulfil your duties. If you put your trust in Him, He will preserve you against all the power of these foreign invaders, but He will as certainly cause you to fall under their yoke, if you do not trust in Him. Your worldly statesmen dream of remedying present mischief, and securing future prosperity, by craftily playing off against one another the barbarian, or other, nations whom they cannot hope to match by force; but God will not allow this to you, as He perchance allows it to other peoples: He and His covenant will be a stumbling-block in your way. He has called both Ephraim and Judah to be His children, and to do His work; and if you refuse, He will as really curse you with blindness and weakness, as He would still bless you with strength and wisdom if you would walk in His way. The greater part of 'both the houses of Israel' will refuse to listen; but I call on you, the small remnant of my faithful hearers and followers, to wait patiently during the present calamities, and to believe that the LORD does but hide His face for a time, that the covenant and promise are but closed and sealed † with a more formal ratification by the delay in their fulfilment,

* Compare Numbers, xx. 12.; Deut. xxxii. 51.; Isaiah, xxix. 23.

† Compare Isaiah, xxix. 11.; Daniel, xii. 4. 9. Also Deut. vi. 8., xi. 18.; Prov. vi. 20, 21., vii. 2, 3.

and that my words and acts, and my name (Salvation of the LORD), and the children (Shear-jashub, Immanuel, Maher-shalal-hash-baz), whom God has given me, are meanwhile His signs and pledges to you of the reality of that ratification. This people will continue their habit (from the days of Saul and earlier) of going to wizards and sorcerers, that they may raise spirits from the dead to tell them what to do in times of political difficulty like the present; but do you reply, when they call on you to join with them, that it is not of the dead, nor of the sorcerers, who with their ventriloquism* seem to receive directions from the shrill voices of familiar spirits, that men should inquire, but of the living God, and of the prophets who declare His will in words of reason and righteousness. Let the people, let Ahaz and his counsellors, refer to God's law and covenant, and to the promises based thereon, which I have even now been commissioned to deliver: if they refuse to do so, there is no dawn of light in the darkness of their souls, nor shall they find any dawn to the night of gathering calamities.

And they shall pass through the land hardly bestead and hungry:
 And it shall be that when they are hungry they shall fret themselves,
 And shall curse their king and their God;
 And they shall look upward, and they shall look unto the earth;
 And behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish;
 And they shall be driven into darkness.

So completely does Isaiah identify the two kingdoms of Israel as one people, on the present occasion, that as the image of this darkness gathers itself around him, he contemplates it, not as in the land of Judah, but in the north of Israel, in that border-land and debatable ground of Galilee, which was politically and religiously debased by the intermixture of Canaanitish tribes with the Hebrews †; the chief cities of which neither Solomon cared to retain, nor Hiram to accept ‡; which lay open to the first brunt of every northern invasion; and which was actually wasted, and its inhabitants carried away, by Tiglath-

* The Septuagint translates 'them that have familiar spirits' by ἐγγαστρούβοι. 'Peep' is *pipiunt*, the 'squeak and gibber' of Shakspeare.

† Judges, i. 30—35.

‡ 1 Kings, ix. 11—13.

Pileser, shortly after the date of this prophecy, if indeed the work had not been already begun by his predecessor Pul*, as seems probable from a comparison of 2 Kings, xv. 19. 29. with 1 Chron. v. 26. v. 26,;—the reading of the Authorised Version of our text may also seem to allude to two successive invasions; but it is a reading rejected by all the modern translators. And some of these very people ‘of Asher, and Manasseh, and Zebulon,’† attended the summons of Hezekiah a few years after, and gave a practical recognition of the unity of Israel by coming up to Jerusalem to the passover:—a fact interesting in itself, and in its reference to the passage before us, and also as raising the question whether Isaiah, or his disciples, may have taken any steps for the actual promulgation of this prophecy in those districts, and thus by their preaching have prepared the way for its fulfilment. Considering how important, wide-spread, and active a body the prophets were, and how much evidence there is both in Hebrew history, and in their writings, of their extensive personal acquaintance with every neighbouring country and people, the supposition is not improbable: and so we pass easily from this partial fulfilment of the prophecy then, to that day when, on that same sea-coast of Tiberias, and in the city of Capernaum, was heard the voice of a greater prophet than Isaiah, preaching and saying ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven’—a greater kingdom than that of Hezekiah—‘is at hand.’‡

Those commentators, who protest against our seeing any reference in this glorious vision to the times of Isaiah, lest we should disparage its fulfilment by the coming of Christ,—and their opponents, who forbid us to view it in the light of the gospel, lest we should overlook the fact that Isaiah and Hezekiah were men of flesh and blood, like ourselves,—both seem to err by a too exclusive literalness, and preference of inferior logic for philosophic insight. Why should Hebrew history alone depart from the law of all other histories, that the earlier events must be read in the light of the later, which are their

* We have still to wait for the translation of the annals of these kings: in which, however, the name of Menahem, king of Israel, has been read by Dr. Hincks.

† 2 Chron. xxx. 1—11.

‡ Matt. iv. 12—25.

necessary developments? Why should prophecy be honoured by making it out to be a mere verbal soothsaying? Let me entreat the reader,—the Christian reader,—and student of the Hebrew prophets, to dread neither of these bugbears, but to see and to reflect for himself, in the firm belief that reason and faith are ever in harmony, and that neither can ever be rightly possessed to the exclusion or neglect of the other. If the English poet of the nineteenth century, whom I have already quoted, claims ‘a vision and a faculty divine’ for his readers as well as himself, we need not hesitate to recognise a like power in ourselves for the better understanding Isaiah, in these parts of his discourses, where, as here, he is so markedly carried out of himself. He sees, as we may see too, if we will only look, the thick darkness, spiritual and temporal, which was gathering over the land, and which reached its height when the nation had generally lapsed into heathenism, and Ahaz their king had shut up the temple, and substituted the worship of false gods even to the sacrifice of his own son to Moloch; and when Ephraim had called in a heathen power to enable it to effect its fratricidal designs against Judah, and Judah had retaliated by summoning another still stronger heathen nation, and the whole land, over which David and Solomon had once reigned gloriously, lay wasted by the sword and tributary to the Assyrian, because abandoned by the LORD, whom they had first abandoned. The people walk in darkness, nay, dwell in the shadow of death! But, see, a great light breaks upon the gloom: multitudes, full of joy and gladness, throng the cities and the fields which just now were deserted; we hear the shouts of the harvest-home, while they present the first-fruits to the LORD*; we see the triumphal procession going up to the temple with the spoils of victory†; we see the armour, the blood-stained cloak, and the war-chariot, gathered to be burnt, since permanent peace is established in the land: we know that they who sowed in tears have reaped in joy, and that the King has come to the rescue of His people; that the yoke of the despot, and the rod of the slave-master are broken; and that a deliverance is effected greater even than that

* Deut. xii. 11, 12., xvi. 11—15.; Psalm iv. 7.

† Compare 1 Chron. xviii. 11.; 2 Chron. xx. 27, 28.

ancient deliverance of Israel from their seven years' bondage, on the night when 'the Midianites and the Amalekites, and all the children of the east, lay along in the valley' (of Jezreel, in this same Galilee of the Gentiles), 'like grasshoppers, and their camels without number, as the sand of the sea-side for multitude,' but 'ran, and cried, and fled,' when the three hundred raised their battle-shout, 'The sword of the LORD and of Gideon:'* and then we recall the actual debasement under Ahaz, and ask, as his disciples must have asked Isaiah, and he must have asked himself, and his God—how this vision and its promises can be true? I do not quote the mighty words of the prophetic reply; but its sense in modern prose, when we have somewhat unravelled the many thoughts and images which are gathered up into each word, seems to be this,—that the believing Israelites are to know that Isaiah's children, and especially the second, with whom, in more than one moment of special inspiration, he has connected the name of Immanuel, though he had formerly called him Maher-shalal-hash-baz, are signs and pledges that God has not forgotten His covenant, nor His ancient promises of a Saviour—the seed of the woman, and the seed of Abraham and David—in whom all nations should be blessed; that this child is a witness that the LORD, the invisible King, is now actually among them, notwithstanding the iniquity of both prince and people; and that He will ere long manifest His presence and power, by restoring the kingdom from its ruinous condition, in the person of a royal deliverer, a Messiah, of the line of David.†

And, as Jacob conferred the birthright and blessing of his race upon the sons of Joseph by saying, 'Let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac' (Genesis, xlviii. 16.); or as the children of Israel in the wilderness were warned to obey the angel who went before them, because the 'name of the LORD was in him;' so the Name of God, wonderful in counsel, mighty in work, the Father of their fathers and of their children for a thousand generations,

* Judges, vii.

† To those for whom music not only 'charms the sense,' but also embodies thoughts and feelings too deep for words, Handel's 'Messiah' is no mean comment on these prophecies.

the eternal Upholder of their race and their nation, and of its prosperity and peace, shall be named upon, shall be in, this anointed saviour. The eternal kingdom already lies about them, though they deny and reject it; it has its foundations in the unchangeable purpose of God, and not in the good or evil dispositions of this or that king and his subjects; and therefore, with no material hinderance from the one, nor help from the other, of these, the zeal of God Himself will effectually carry forward the work, and spread this kingdom of righteousness and peace, without limit of time or place. Some commentators think 'mighty hero' a more accurate translation than 'mighty God,' as the word (לִשְׁׁ) is used in such a sense in Ezekiel, xxxi. 11., and xxxii. 21., in the former of which places it is applied to Nebuchadnezzar: but we know that the Old Testament does not scruple to 'call them gods to whom the word of God came;' and I prefer our Authorised Translation, explaining it as I have here done.

It requires a deeper insight into the relative activity of the imagination and the logical faculties in the Hebrew prophets, and into the degree of definiteness with which — in actual historical fact — the expectation of a Messiah presented itself to Isaiah and his contemporaries, than I possess, to authorise a positive opinion how far the prophet, in uttering the words before us, was thinking of his own times and circumstances. Yet I am unable to form any distinct notion of Isaiah as a man and Israelite, and as a prophet of the LORD in contrast with those muttering wizards he denounces, without supposing that, at this period of his life and ministry, he must have connected the thought of 'the Child' with Hezekiah, on whom the name of the mighty God had been actually named*, and who (being now a boy nine or ten years old), may already have given promise of the piety which afterwards distinguished him: — and that he would not, *at this time*, have considered that his prediction would be quite inadequately realized, if the youthful prince should, on his accession to the throne of David and Solomon, renew the glories of their reigns, in which peace and justice were established at home and abroad, through trust in the LORD

* Hezekiah means 'the LORD will strengthen.'

and His covenant: — reigns of which the historical facts must be studied in the light which the Book of Psalms, and such passages as 2 Chronicles, ix. 1—8., throw on them. I say, *at this time*, because we shall have occasion to inquire, what was the effect on Isaiah's mind when he did see a restoration, under Hezekiah, of such a reign of righteousness and prosperity ; and whether his expectation of the Messiah did not eventually assume a very different form from what could have been possible to him at the time we now speak of. There is a method, through this whole book of Isaiah's prophecies, which reflects a corresponding progress in the prophet's own mind ; and this method offers us a clue through difficulties which are otherwise impassable, if we will only hold it fast, and follow its guidance fairly.

CHAPTER VIII.

ISAIAH VII.—XII.—EPIC UNITY.—OBSTINATE ENERGY OF THE HERBREW RACE.—LAWLESSNESS OF THE TEN TRIBES.—LEGALISM OF JUDAH.—THE KING OF ASSYRIA.—GODS IN THE IMAGE OF MEN.—THE SCOURGE OF NATIONS, AND ITS WIELDER.—ANCIENT ROADS.—THE KING OF THE STOCK OF JESSE.—THE GOLDEN AGE.—FUSION OF CONFLICTING ELEMENTS IN A NATION.—CONSEQUENCES OF THE REVOLT OF EPHRAIM.—DEPORTATION OF JEWS IN ISAIAH'S TIME.—THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH—ITS RELATION TO THE WORLD.—THE WATER OF SALVATION.

THE strophical arrangement of Isaiah, ix. 8. to x. 4., is supposed by many commentators to mark it for a distinct prophecy, delivered soon after the last; while they see in the allusion to Samaria, as actually taken by the Assyrians (chap. x. 10.), proof that the following prophecy from x. 5. to the end of chapter xii. cannot date earlier than the sixth year of Hezekiah. But these arguments are not conclusive. There is no reason why a style of discourse in which historical narrative, political oratory, and poetical rhythm as well as imagery, are equally in place, should not embody in itself a refrain several times repeated and then dropped, just as in other instances we find it containing a song or psalm.* Nor shall we find any difficulty in explaining, by the ordinary prophetic usage of the past for the future, a reference to the taking of Samaria, not more, though not less, definite than those which were undoubtedly made before the event, even if it be premature to rely on the reading of the Khorsabad inscription, referred to above, as recording a capture of Samaria just after that of Damascus, and ten years before that which was previously known to us. On the other hand, we have the probability of a general adherence to chronological order in the actual arrangement of the book: the indications of an unbroken current of thought†: the unity of subject of the whole portion, chapters vii. to

* Chap. xxvi. 1., xxvii. 2.; and compare the repetition in Amos, i. and ii.

† As is verses 24, 25, 26, of chapter x., compared with chapter viii. 8, 9, 10.; x. 6., with viii. 1. 4.; x. 27., with ix. 3.; x. 21., with vii. 3. (Shear-jashub); xi. 1—5., with ix. 6, 7.; and xi. 13, 14., with ix. 12. 20, 21.

xii. inclusive: and, lastly, the probability, of which I believe the reader will see more evidence the longer he considers the subject, that here, as throughout the book, the author's own hand may have been at work, arranging, retouching, and fusing together the records of discourses originally distinct. These chapters form a kind of epic whole (itself a part of a still larger whole), in which the internecine enmities of the Ten Tribes among themselves, and with Judah, and the alliances with the heathen nations, by which they support these enmities, only to involve themselves in the common ruin, are traced to their first causes, and the loss of national unity and freedom shown to be the consequence of the loss of that spiritual unity and liberty which can only spring from, and be sustained by, a living faith — in king and people — in the unseen but present LORD of the nation and of each member of it: subjection to the heathenish, godless, Assyrian power, is shown to be the proper and effectual punishment of the national sin; and a restoration, in and through the reign of a righteous prince of the line of David, is declared to be certain, because God Himself is pledged to it by a covenant which men's evil doings cannot cancel. The prophet stands as on a hill or tower, and sees the past and the future, the distant and the near, in one completed whole, in which all events and all wills have but subserved the almighty Master-will; and, therefore, we find here an instance of the propriety of the word *epic*, which has with so much force been applied to the writings of the Hebrew prophets generally by Mr. Maurice.* In the second edition of the work referred to, this author has, indeed, omitted this and much more of formal comparison between the Hebrew and classical types of literature, apparently lest his readers should mistake a vital relation for a technical correspondence, and fall into the bondage to names which that mistake always brings us. But if we take care how we call the prophets 'epic poets,' and then fancy we understand them, we shall find a real light thrown on the subject by this word, which is farther explained by Coleridge's observation, that epic and dramatic poetry are alike founded on the relation

* *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, 1st edition. See also *Educational Magazine*, vol. ii. p. 226.

of Providence to the human will ; but that while, in the latter, the will is exhibited as struggling with fate, in the former a pre-announced fate (or Providence) gradually adjusts and employs the will and the events as the instruments for accomplishing its designs : — *Διὸς δὲ τέλειετο βουλή.**

The Jewish historian, in relating the fall of Samaria (2 Kings, xvii.) as the punishment of national sin, says, ‘ Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets and all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and statutes, according to the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.’ And here we have one of these repeated warnings, in this ‘ word which the Lord sent unto Jacob,’ by Isaiah. The Ten Tribes had already suffered many an infliction ; their political organisation had often been broken up by civil wars and foreign invasions, as the house of unburnt brick dissolves into mud before the rain ; and the flower of the people had been cut down as lavishly as men cut down the cheap sycamores : but with that stoutness of heart, that obstinate toughness, which, in all ages to the present, has marked this race, the men of Ephraim and Samaria seem to rise superior to every calamity ; like Solomon (1 Kings, x. 27.) they will change the sycamores for cedars, and they will replace the bricks with hewn stones. The conversion of Damascus from an ancient enemy to an ally encourages them in their hopes ; but the LORD will confound their policy by bringing the conquerors of Damascus upon them.

The histories mention inroads of the Philistines into Judah, though not into Israel, at this period ; but we can believe the latter did not escape, as these marauders were not likely to miss an opportunity, especially when once in movement. The ‘ Syrians’ are either the same allies whose arms, on their becoming tributary to Tiglath-Pileser, would at once be turned against Ephraim ; or the word (Aram) may be used in a sense wide enough to include the Assyrians themselves. Tiglath-Pileser took Damascus, killed Rezin, and carried the people away captive ; and we find Ahaz going there to meet the Assy-

* *Literary Remains*, vol. ii. pp. 159. 164.

rian, when it is related that he took the pattern of an altar at Damascus, and adopted the gods of Syria, 'because they helped them,' an account which can only be applicable to the gods of Tiglath-Pileser.*

'The people turneth not unto Him that smiteth them,' and therefore they shall be smitten again and again. It will not be a mere political change of an Assyrian satrap for an Israelite king, but every rank, every household, from the highest to the lowest, shall suffer:—though youth is the season of joy, the young men shall find that it is not so, when the LORD, the source of joy, has no joy in them; though mercy and pity are the natural right of the fatherless and widow, they shall find that God himself refuses them these: and the reason is, that all of them, man, woman, and child, are demoralised and corrupted; one may be a hypocrite, and another an open sinner, but all speak, because their heart believes, the language of that folly which is contrary to, and which denies and excludes, the knowledge of God. That in the middle of this threatening of universal calamity upon head and tail, palm-tree and rush, we should find an explanation that the 'tail' is the prophet that teacheth lies, and not the common people, as the context demands, does not require the supposition of an interpolation by a later hand, as some say. We have constant occasion to notice the Hebrew disregard of that mere logical balance of sentences which indeed soon becomes an intolerable pedantry in any other language: and here Isaiah's knowledge of what the teachers of a people ought to be, and might be, and of how great is their personal responsibility, stops him, before he can complete the explanation of the tail and the rush, and he turns it as though he had said, 'No, the common people are brutal and degraded enough, but the men who have been the cause of this debasement are more guilty, and more contemptible than they: they are the dregs of all.'

The wickedness of the land becomes its own punishment, and burns with a fury which is indeed the wrath of God, while its fuel is the people themselves. The images of slaughter and fire—at once fact and symbol—suggest that of famine so despe-

* 2 Kings, xvi., 2 Chron. xxviii.

rate that 'no man shall spare his brother,' nay 'they shall eat every one the flesh of his own arm.' Ephraim and Manasseh were brethren of each other, and of Judah: and the history of the kingdom of the former is a history of tyrannies, rebellions, anarchies at home; of wars with Judah; and of invasions and subjugations by foreigners; and even at this time, the assassination of Pekah seems to have been followed by a nine years' interregnum and anarchy, as far as we can trace and make out the lines of a picture of which the indistinctness is a token of its accurate representation of the reality.* 'The allusions of the verse,' says Dr. Alexander, 'are not to one exclusive period, but to a protracted series of events. The intestine strifes of Ephraim and Manasseh, although not recorded in detail, may be inferred from various incidental statements. Of their ancient rivalry we have examples in the history of Gideon (Judges, viii. 1—3.) and Jephthah (Judges, xii. 1—6.); and as to later times, it is observed by Vitranga that of all who succeeded Jeroboam, the second on the throne of Israel, Pekahiah alone appears to have attained it without treachery or bloodshed. That Manasseh and Ephraim were both against Judah, may refer either to their constant enmity or to particular attacks. No sooner did one party gain the upper hand in the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, than it seems to have addressed itself to the favourite work of harassing or conquering Judah, as in the case of Pekah, who invaded it almost as soon as he had waded to the throne through the blood of Pekahiah.†

The strophical form connects the following verses (x. 1—4.) with the preceding, as the exclamation with which they begin does with those that come after; and in both are corresponding links of the subject itself. The prophet has described the sins of Ephraim in a general manner; but on the mention of Judah, he proceeds to denounce what we know from the whole tenour of his discourses he felt to be the worst form of the guilt of his own people, with a particularity which it is perhaps not

* Compare the historical accounts and dates, in 2 Kings, xv., with Hosea, vii. 7.

† Alexander's *Prophecies of Isaiah*, chap. ix. 20. It is worth mentioning, that for critical purposes the reader must consult the *unabridged* American edition of this learned work, or its Glasgow reprint.

fanciful to attribute to his thoughts being now directed home-wards. The Ten Tribes were far more ferocious and anarchical than the men of Judah: there are many indications in the latter of that national respect for law which so characterises the English, that it has been observed *, that though history attributes to us our share in national wickedness, our crimes have almost always been committed under colour of law, and not by open violence, — as in the series of judicial murders in the reigns of Henry VIII., Charles II., and James II. And therefore, Isaiah's mind is, perhaps, recurring to Judah, when he denounces the utmost severity of God's wrath in the day in which He, the righteous Judge, shall come to visit 'an hypocritical nation,' whose nobles and magistrates decree, and execute, unrighteous decrees,

To turn aside the needy from judgment,
And to take away the right from the poor of my people,
That widows may be their prey,
And that they may rob the fatherless!

They are satisfied that they are safe in their heartless selfishness, with peace at home and protection abroad restored by their statecraft and their alliance with Assyria. But while they thus rejoice at home, 'desolation cometh from far.' To whom will they fly for help when God has abandoned them? Under whose protection will they leave their wealth, their dignities, their glory, which they have been heaping up for themselves? Captivity or death are the only prospects before them. And yet, as though no judgments could sufficiently condemn and punish their utter wickedness, the prophet repeats,

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand is stretched out still.

Where the arguments of the learned commentators seem so nearly balanced, and no one shows such an insight into the spirit of the whole text as to claim submission to his authority, I do not presume to dogmatise: but in such a case we must assume something; and on the assumption which I have already preferred, that these chapters (vii. to xii.) form one prophecy, the

* By Lord Campbell.

scope of the portion before us will be this :—Isaiah turns from Ephraim and Judah to Assyria with an apparent abruptness which does but half conceal the real connection, or rather unity, of all the parts of his subject: quite ignoring the petty statecraft by which Ahaz and his counsellors were bringing Assyria upon themselves as well as on their enemies, the prophet goes at once to the heart of the matter, and shows us the LORD come to execute justice upon the nations, and the Assyrians as the rod and instrument of that justice; and he employs the whole force of his imagination to do justice to ‘the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks,’ in order that he may give more emphasis to the scorn with which the LORD, and the servants of the LORD, look on his pretensions and power, and that he may bring into fuller contrast with this kingdom of the world, which Ahaz and his people make the sole object of their hopes and fears, that other kingdom which stands, and ever shall stand, in the will not of man but of God. The old Babel monarchy, which carried its traditions back to the days of Nimrod, that mighty hunter before the LORD, and was in all ages the very type of sheer, godless, arbitrary power, had, in the time of Isaiah and the generation before him, renewed its strength, and become the terror and the scourge of all the neighbouring countries; for the LORD of hosts, the Lord of the whole earth, had sent this northern conqueror forth, and ‘given him a charge to take the spoil and to take the prey.’ One nation after another had fallen before him; his satraps sat in the thrones of their once independent kings; the national gods of ancient kingdoms could not preserve their shrines nor their votaries from his hand; Samaria might trust to her golden calves, but they were within his grasp; and the cherubims of Jerusalem, or what other unseen images might be hidden and worshipped in her holy of holies, would soon prove equally powerless:—thus he boasted, little thinking that he was the merest tool in the hands of an unknown Master, who was exactly limiting his actions by the purposes for which he was being used.

‘I took the cities, I gave them up to pillage, I slew the inhabitants;’ or, ‘I devastated the country, I took away the king, with his priests and his gods, his warriors and his wives,

his gold, silver, and cattle, I carried all the men and women into slavery, I brought there the people of other cities ;'—such are the records which meet us every where in the newly-deciphered annals of these Assyrian kings, and such the subjects of the sculptures which ornamented their palaces. But the reference is also constant to the god in whose strength they have done these things, and whose worship they have thereby established every where : and it is interesting to notice the apparent one-sidedness with which Isaiah, here and elsewhere, omits all reference to this religious spirit of the conquerors, while his words are otherwise (except for the poetry) so exact a counterpart of the Assyrian phraseology. It is the one-sidedness of the practical man, who goes straight to the single point on which all the rest really depends. The prophet who, without phrase of qualification, told the strictly religious Jews that the whole ritual which they were practising in exact conformity with the law, was an unbearable abomination*, would have asserted, in equally plain terms, that the religion of Assyria was no religion. God, the living and true God, had revealed Himself to Isaiah, and to Isaiah's nation, as the Being in whose image man was created ; and in whom therefore justice, honesty, truth, kindness, and every other properly human virtue, which in man feebly struggled for existence, had its own perfect, absolute reality, without the limits or the defects of the finite. This LORD of man, the Jehovah, or I AM†, had made Himself known to Isaiah as He had to Moses, and as He does still to each of us : and when the prophet turned to look at the 'gods of the nations' he saw at once that they were something different—nay, exactly reverse,—in kind. On the one hand, God was the prototype of man ; on the other, man of God. The god of the Assyrian was made in the image of the Assyrian, was the projected form of his own character. The spirit which was embodied in that dignified human figure with its eagle's head and wings, was but the spirit of the actual Sargon or Sennacherib, with his wide and resistless swoop, his ravenous maw, his royal cruelty.‡ And when he led out that terrible cavalry,

* Isaiah, i. 11—14.

† Exodus, iii. 14.

‡ See the majestic figures who have captives flayed, or their eyes put out,

in the ranks of which there was no ungirt warrior, no unbent bow, no horse's hoof not hard as flint, and whose shout struck panic into all who heard it *, when he went forth to conquest at their head, from that palace and city of which we have not altogether to imagine the magnificence,—we know that the winged lions, and the human-headed bulls, whom he took with him, full of fierce life, were but imperfectly represented by those which he left behind, carved in stone, at the portals of his own house, or the house of his god. We may see from the vision in chapter vi., that the distinction between the two kinds of religion—that which God reveals to man, and that which man makes for himself—is not obliterated or enfeebled, but brought out more plainly, by the fact that the cherubims at Jerusalem were, in other respects, the counterparts of these sphinx-like creatures of the neighbouring nations: we see the same human element, the same religious sentiment, the same capacity for worship, the same human methods of expressing this sentiment and capacity: the difference is between the nation, or the man, in whom this human element is met by a real unveiling and communication of God Himself, from above, and those in whom it is not so met, and who therefore substitute a projection of themselves for its independent existence. At the same time we must not, in our objective study of the heathen world, overlook that we Christians (like the Jews of old) do habitually combine much of this heathenish temper with the true faith which has been given us. If we look in any direction where the particular religious prejudice no longer blinds us, we can see, for instance, how much of the harsh notions which Calvin and the Puritans mixed up (as we now perceive so unworthily) with their true worship of God, was the reflex of men's ordinary notions of justice, and of magisterial duty as well as right, in those days, and which did not shock them when attributed to God, because they held them, as of course, in all their worldly dealings. So, the new form which the 'doctrine of election and reprobation' took, in the religious revival of the last century, did but reflect the narrow class notions which took

in their presence; as, for instance, Sennacherib at Lachish, in Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon* (1853), p. 150. Truly eagle-like men.

* See page 65., above.

for granted that a gentleman was, and would be to the end of time, a finer species of creature than a working man. And in our own day, are not the notions of a God who is pleased with lighted candles, or whose character is one of mawkish good-nature, in which the desire to spare bodily pain has superseded all regard for the distinction between crime and virtue, but varieties of the same vice? It is instructive to see these things behind and around us, if we take heed that they teach us to look within also,—to remember that each of us has his own idol, made in his own image, which he is ever substituting for the true God, and that from God must be obtained the help for discovering and deposing that idol.

To return to the Assyrian conqueror :—He does not suspect that he is the instrument in the hands of the LORD, much less desire the LORD's help or guidance; and therefore, according to the prophet's view of things, he does not rely on any god, but simply on his own military power and political sagacity. He first boasts that he does all things by his own prudence and strength, and then dwells exultingly on the nature of his doings: valiant man that he is, he puts down one nation after another, taking possession of their treasuries, transplanting the inhabitants to other cities and lands, and obliterating the ancient limits of what from independent kingdoms are now but provinces in his great military empire. He has come upon nation after nation, as it dwelt in peace with all the fruits of peace, and has 'found their riches as a nest*:' he has gathered all the earth as one gathers the eggs from which he has first driven off the terrified hen-bird. But she would hover round her rifled nest, and its plunderer, with a trepidating flight and piercing cry, than which no movements and sounds in the brute creation express more anguish; while these spoiled nations dare not show even such instinctive signs of a broken heart, but know a depth beyond that depth :—

* Xenophon says of the attempt of Epaminondas to surprise Sparta, — *ἔλαβεν ἂν τὴν πόλιν ὥσπερ νεοττίαν, παντάπασιν ἔρημον τῶν ἀμυνομένων.*—*Hellen.* vii. 5. 10., quoted in Grote's *History of Greece*, x. 454. This alarm must have been as thrilling to a Greek as the danger of Jerusalem to a Jew: and it is interesting to notice the universal language of passion in remote times and peoples. It is one of the minuter evidences of our common race.

For he saith,
 By the strength of my hand I have done it,
 And by my wisdom ; for I am prudent :
 And I have removed the bounds of the nations,
 And have robbed their treasures,
 And I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man :
 And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the peoples :
 And as one gathereth eggs that are left,
 Have I gathered all the earth ;
 And there was none that moved the wing,
 Or that opened the mouth, or that chirped.

Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith ?
 Shall the saw magnify itself against him that handleth it ?
 As if the rod should wield him that lifteth it,
 As if the staff should lift up the man !

This passage, itself a specimen of the whole context, is quite a study, political and artistic: political for him who seeks the law of the rise and fall of military despotisms; artistic, as an illustration of the working of the imagination, the 'power by which one image or feeling is made to modify many others, and by a sort of fusion to force many into one, . . . and which, combining many circumstances into one moment of consciousness, tends to produce that ultimate end of all human thought and human feelings, unity, and thereby the reduction of the spirit to its Principle and Fountain, who is alone truly One.*' And the prophet and poet goes on with the same luxuriance of imagination, and the same severity of righteous faith. 'The Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall send among his fat ones leanness:' the allusion seems to be to fat herds, 'fat bulls of Bashan;' and these, one would almost say, suggested the thought of the oaks of Bashan, if the previous mention of the axe and the saw did not seem to reverse the succession of the images which crowd in on every side. The 'glory,' the whole equipments and ammunitions, the pomp and the splendour of the warrior king, shall be burnt up, and the Light of Israel shall be the consuming fire. If the Assyrians are to be thus destroyed it is because they are mere noxious thorns and briars, only fit for burning. If their power entitles them to be rather

* Coleridge's *Literary Remains*, vol. ii. pp. 55, 56. These lectures on the genius of Shakspeare throw much light on that of Isaiah.

compared with lofty forest trees, and their wealth and extended dominion to the 'fruitful field,' with its vineyards, and olive-grounds, and gardens, still they shall be consumed, even as they have often wasted such scenes with fire in their marches: they shall be destroyed utterly, 'soul and body,' for they are no trees but men, and like men wasted by sickness they shall perish. And then, to gather up the whole once more in the picture of the heaven-kindled conflagration of the forest with its lofty trees and its jungles, and the fruitful fields lying all about it,—we see of all these trees, which it would have once required many and skilful enumerators to reckon, so few that a child can count and write them down, while the child himself, in the midst of the desolation, suggests new trains of thought, not foreign to the subject.

If Assyria is to be reduced to such a remnant, so is the people, the two houses, of Israel. The LORD of hosts has decreed a righteous execution of judgment upon his guilty people through the land, and though they were as the sand of the sea in numbers, only a remnant of them shall be left. But that remnant shall return * unto their God and King: they will have learnt the lesson sent through so much suffering; and instead of continuing to trust in Assyria, and their alliance with that worldly and faithless power, they 'shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.' And then Isaiah, with that feminine tenderness which so frequently shows itself in his sternest denunciations, hastens to exclaim, 'Therefore, thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian;' it is true that he shall for a time oppress you with a bondage like that which in old times you endured when you were the serfs of Pharaoh, or the tributaries of Midian; but as the slaughter at the rock of Oreb was an effectual scourge to that scourge of Israel, and as the rods of the Egyptian taskmasters were broken in the hour in which Moses stretched out his rod upon the sea, so shall it be now; for yet a little while, and the Lord will stir up a scourge, and lift up His rod, and His indignation against His people shall cease in the destruction of their, and His, enemies. The words in verse 27., which

* *Shear jashub* are the words of the original, where there is also a play on *Jashub* and *Jacob*, such as *Isaiah* is fond of.

our version renders by ‘because of the anointing,’ are, literally, *in the face of* (i. e. *because of*) *oil*, or *fatness*, or *anointing*: and it is doubtful whether the meaning be that the LORD will not suffer the anointed Israel — the race of kings and priests — to continue in bondage to the great worldly, godless, power; or that the metaphor of the yoke suggests that of the bullock bursting it by the fatness of his neck, or rejecting it in the lustihood of his strength, as in Deut. xxxii. 15.; Hosea, iv. 16. x. 11.

From historical parallel and poetic metaphor, Isaiah passes to a vivid description of the march of the Assyrians upon Jerusalem, as it ‘flashed upon his inward eye,’ with all the distinctness of sense. The rival literalists who explain this passage as a miraculous prediction, or a narrative after the event, are alike refuted by the historical accounts, from which it appears that Sennacherib did not invade Judah from the north, but from the south or south-west. For though both the traditional name of the ‘camp of the Assyrians’ which still existed in the time of Josephus, and the nature of the ground which lays Jerusalem most open to an attack on the north, make it probable that this was the quarter in which Rabshakeh did actually, a few years later, ‘shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion,’ he would not have brought his army round by the defile of Michmash. The places here mentioned, and several of which were found, still retaining their names, by Messrs. Robinson and Smith*, lay in succession between the northern frontier of Judah and Jerusalem: and the remains of a square tower and large hewn stones which they found at Jeba, opposite to Mukhmàs (i. e. Michmash), and supposed to be Gibeah of Saul, and the like marks of Mukhmàs itself having been once a place of strength, taken in connection with the accounts in 1 Sam. xiii., xiv., and 1 Mac. ix. 73., make it more than probable that this was the route which Isaiah might reasonably expect the invaders to take. The high road indeed no longer runs that way, and Dr. Robinson says that the common approach to Jerusalem can never have lain through these deep and difficult ravines: but it has been pointed out to me† that while it would sufficiently vindicate the

* *Biblical Researches*, vol. ii. p. 110. ff.

† By my brother, Captain R. Strachey. I have since read the following like solution of the like difficulty: — “I do not share the doubts which have

propriety of the picture to observe, that an Assyrian army would direct its course not by what might be the high road, but by what was the line of still unplundered towns and villages, the geographical probability is all in favour of the route described having been the actual northern highway. For the present road, which is so much more practicable, lies along the water-shed, where the ground, although better for engineering purposes, is worse for houses or cultivation from the want of water: and such roads, in which the convenient junction of extreme points is the main object, are a comparatively modern invention, though the most in accordance with our notions of a highway. But in Isaiah's time, even the main roads would be those which had been formed, stage by stage, for the communication of each town or village with the ones immediately before and behind it; and these towns would, in the present case, have lain thickest in the very line in question: for while the water-shed is just to the west, and 'lower down the slope, towards the Jordan valley, all is a frightful desert,' the steep hill-sides, in which these towns were clustered, from Anathoth to Michmash, still show signs of that 'strong and fertile soil' which (as has been explained before) only needs terracing to make the rock a garden, and which, even as it is, Dr. Robinson here found producing 'fields of grain occasionally, and fig trees and olive trees every where.'

Let us now return, to stand with the prophet on some watch-tower of Jerusalem, in vision, and see the enemy's troops as they enter the frontier city Aiath, or Ai, which

been raised about Xenophon's accuracy, in his description of the route from Sardis to Ikonium; though the names of several of the places which he mentions are not known to us, and their sites cannot be exactly identified. There is a great departure from the straight line of bearing. But we at the present day assign more weight to that circumstance than is suited to the days of Xenophon. Straight roads, stretching systematically over a large region of country, are not of that age: the communications were probably all originally made between one neighbouring town and another, without much reference to saving of distance, and with no reference to any promotion of traffic between distant places. "It was just about this time that King Archelaus began to 'cut straight roads' in Macedonia, — which Thucydides seems to note as a remarkable thing (ii. 100.)." Grote's *Hist. of Greece*, ix. 23., note.

Joshua had once taken from the Canaanitish king : they pass through Migron ; and, meeting no resistance at Michmash, the northern key to the defile, they there leave their baggage, lest it should impede the rapid advance with which ‘ they pass the Pass,’ and establish their quarters at Geba, which commands the southern exit. The inaction and stupor which had allowed this position to be mastered, is now succeeded by open panic : Ramah trembles ; Gibeah of Saul — the birth-place of the king of whose feats, and the feats of his son Jonathan, in discomfiting countless hosts of Philistines in these very defiles, the old national stories told — Gibeah is fled ; Laish hears the shrieks of Gallim ; and wretched Anathoth * answers not with her echoes alone, but with a too real cry of despair, for an enemy, whom neither human pity nor fear of religion moves, is upon the city of Levites ; Madmenah is gone, and Gebim fled ; every hill-top within sight of Jerusalem is covered with those terrible horsemen from the north ; at Nob the Assyrian is seen to halt, preparatory to the assault, and ‘ he shakes his hand against the Mount of the daughter of Zion.’ At once the vision gives place to another ; the prophet recalls the previous promise, with the previous image it was expressed under : —

Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
Doth lop the chief bough with terror ;
And the high of stature are hewn down,
And the haughty are humbled.
And he shall cut down the thickets with iron,
And Lebanon shall fall by a mighty hand.

The root of the word translated ‘ bough ’ means ‘ adorn,’ so that it is the chief or top bough, forming the ornamental head of the tree, which is alluded to. The image is now transferred to the state and king of Israel, which is also to be cut down to the stump, like the tree in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. But out of that stump, and from its living roots, shall grow up a scion — one of those slender shoots which we see springing

* “ The prophet plainly alludes to the name of the place (lit. *the Answers*) ; and with a peculiar propriety, if it had its name from its remarkable echo.” — Lowth, on the verse.

up from, and immediately round, the stock of a truncated tree.* A king of the race of Jesse shall sit on the throne of his fathers, in accordance with the covenant made with David: —

‘I have made a covenant with my chosen,
I have sworn unto David my servant,
Thy seed will I establish for ever,
And build up thy throne unto all generations.’†

The Spirit of the LORD shall not merely direct this son of David by occasional and transient impulses, but shall abide continually with him, habitually filling him with the spirit, the very life, of insight into the principles and laws of God’s government of the world, and of discernment how to apply those principles to actual circumstances, so as to bring the latter into harmony with the former; he shall receive the spirit of true statesmanship, enabling him to understand and to rule, not ideas and things, but men; he shall have that personal knowledge of God which is the living source of love and reverence for Him; his delight in this knowledge and fear of God shall enable him accurately to discern the like disposition in others, so that, with an eye purged from the film of sense, he shall not fail to recognise the cause of truth and righteousness in his kingdom; and when he has declared his righteous sentence, he will ever stand ready to execute it with prompt and strict justice.

And the wolf shall make his home with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
And the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.
And the cow and the she-bear shall feed together;
Together shall their young ones lie down;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,
And the weaned child shall put his hand on the crested adder’s den.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain:

* “Vos modo, milites, favete nomini Scipionum, *soboli* imperatorum vestrorum, velut *accisis recrescenti stirpibus*.” Liv. lib. xxvi. c. 41. Quoted by Vitrिंगa.

† Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4.

For the earth is full of the knowledge of the LORD,
As the waters cover the sea.
And in that day shall a root of Jesse stand for an ensign to the
peoples ;
To it shall the nations seek :
And his dwelling-place shall be glorious.

The latter lines give the reason why this golden age, described in language which Lowth says is not equalled by the classical or the Arabic and Persian poets, shall come in the days of the righteous king. It is because his kingdom, which is the kingdom of the LORD, shall extend its influence over, and be recognised by, the whole earth. From the history of the reigns of David, Solomon, and Hezekiah, we see that when there was a righteous king in Israel, he not only governed his own people in wisdom and the fear of the LORD, promoting education and civilisation in that spirit of the ancient law and constitution which is embodied in the book of Deuteronomy, and thus establishing truth and justice, peace and happiness, religion and piety, throughout the land, but that he at the same time (as we might have expected) exercised a humanising influence over the neighbouring nations, gave them glimpses at least of the superiority of the LORD God of Israel over their own idols, and disseminated among them principles of moral and political order which continued to germinate more or less effectually, notwithstanding the resistance of national vice, ignorance, and superstition. But these, and such as these, were but the shadow of good things to come: the acts of Jewish kings, like the words of Jewish prophets, were but various and partial ways of repeating, rather than of realising, the great cardinal promise made to Abraham, or the great prophetic ideal of the Righteous King which was revealed to Isaiah and the rest of the prophets. But that better thing which God had provided for us, that they without us should not be perfect, is actually come in the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of David. By the manifestation of the Righteous King in His own person, the golden age has been made far more actual, and we brought into a far closer connection with it, than was possible or even conceivable in the days of Solomon or Hezekiah. Then the chosen race itself had but a dim knowledge of God, and the nations of the

earth could but hear of Him through the testimony of the Jewish people and its kings; but now a greater than Solomon, even the LORD himself, is come into each nation which receives His gospel and His church, and abides in it as its ever-present though invisible King. True it is, that even in those kingdoms of the world which have become the kingdoms of our LORD Christ, we do not yet see all things put under His feet; the ideal is still far from completely one with, and transcendent through and over, the actual, the heavenly over the earthly; but by him who has an eye to see, the one may be plainly discerned every where hid under the other, capable of being developed, nay, waiting and ready to be revealed in ever new and more glorious forms. Our part is to believe this heartily, heartily to take our appointed share in the work of realisation; and not the less so, because we learn more and more every day that we do work, how small our share, how large God's share, in the work must be; that man's chief business is to

‘Leave to Heaven

The work of Heaven, and with a silent spirit
Sympathise with the powers that work in silence.’

I have followed our version in the use of the word ‘*earth*’ in verse 9., though the original might equally be translated ‘*land*,’ which would limit the promise of this kingdom of righteousness to Israel, as the reference to the ‘peoples’ and the ‘nations’ in the next verse, compared with such passages as chapter ii. 2—4., xix. 18—25., is in favour of the wider sense. But the idea of the universal kingdom is certainly not so prominent here as in those and many other places, being subordinated to that of the bringing back ‘the outcasts of Israel’ and the ‘dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth’ to their own land and LORD, and of their reunion into one people as at first.

“Jacob, in his prophetic statement of the fortunes of his sons, disregards the rights of primogeniture, and gives the pre-eminence to Judah and Joseph (Gen. xlix. 8—12., 22—26.), and in the family of the latter to the younger son Ephraim (Gen. xlviii. 19.). Hence, from the time of the exodus, these two were regarded as the leading tribes of Israel. Judah was

much more numerous than Ephraim (Numb. i. 27. 33.), took precedence during the journey in the wilderness (Numb. ii. 3., x. 14.), and received the largest portion in the promised land. But Joshua was an Ephraimite (Numb. xiii. 8.); and Shiloh, where the tabernacle long stood (Josh. xviii. 1., 1 Sam. iv. 3.), was probably within the limits of the same tribe. The ambitious jealousy of the Ephraimites towards other tribes appears in their conduct to Gideon and Jephthah (Judges, viii. 1., xii. 1.). Their special jealousy of Judah showed itself in their temporary refusal to submit to David after the death of Saul, in their adherence to Absalom against his father, and in the readiness with which they joined in the revolt of Jeroboam, who was himself of the tribe of Ephraim (1 Kings, xi. 26.) This schism was, therefore, not a sudden or fortuitous occurrence, but the natural result of causes which had long been working. The mutual relation of the two kingdoms is expressed in the recorded fact that ‘there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, and between Asa and Baasha, all their days’ (1 Kings, xiv. 30., xv. 16.). Exceptions to the general rule, as in the case of Ahab and Jehoshaphat, were rare, and a departure from the principles and ordinary feelings of the parties. The ten tribes, which assumed the name of Israel after the division, and perhaps before it, regarded the smaller and less warlike state with a contempt which is well expressed by Jehoash in his parable of the cedar and the thistle (2 Kings, xiv. 9.), unless the feeling there displayed be rather personal than national. On the other hand, Judah justly regarded Israel as guilty not only of political revolt, but of religious apostacy (Psalm lxxviii. 9—11.), and the jealousy of Ephraim towards Judah would of course be increased by the fact that Jehovah had ‘forsaken the tabernacle of Shiloh’ (Psalm lxxviii. 60.), that he ‘refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which he loved’ (Psalm lxxviii. 67, 68.)”* If Solomon had, like his father David, retained to the last his faith in the one God of Israel, and in that maxim of government which David laid down in his ‘last words,’ that ‘he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in

* Alexander’s note on verse 13.

the fear of God,' and if Rehoboam, Solomon's son, had followed in the same path, it is probable that they might have solved this difficult political problem of fusing into one nation various conflicting parties and interests, of which I believe the solution has always failed or succeeded according as unity of national worship, and equal rights and justice, have or have not been established:—the centralisation of military force, whether domestic or foreign, is not a fusion, but a suppression, and (if it lasts) a destruction of the elements of national life. But Solomon forgot David's dying counsel that he should 'keep the charge of the LORD his God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it was written in the law of Moses;' and his own prayer when he came to the throne, that the LORD would give him 'an understanding heart to judge His people, to discern between good and evil,' and to follow the footsteps of 'the truth, righteousness, and uprightness of heart before God,' with which, and not with the arbitrary hand of the military chieftain, or the selfishness of the oriental despot, David had made it his aim to govern 'this God's so great people.*' The men were not equal to the

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.; 1 Kings, ii. 2, 3, 4., iii. 6—9. In referring the reader to these passages, it may not be out of place to notice an opinion that David's subsequent directions to Solomon 'to bring down the hoar heads of Joab and Shimei to the grave with blood,' are expressions of a revengeful malice inconsistent with a character of piety and justice. A moderately thoughtful examination and comparison of the various notices of these men, and the transactions in which they figured, including their deaths, will make it plain that Joab, though a faithful supporter of David's throne, was a brutal soldier, with an influence over the army which made him independent, not only of the king, but of the laws; while Shimei was a powerful chieftain of the house of Saul, and ready to proceed to any opposition to the reigning dynasty. David was unable to dismiss Joab, and, in a temper as humane as politic, he included the rebel Shimei in the general amnesty when he recovered his crown, and declared, 'There shall no man be put to death this day in Israel.' But he warned Solomon — and Solomon's mode of acting on the warning gives the fair, historical, interpretation of its precise meaning — that these two men would be his most dangerous enemies, the one of his person and house, and the other (who 'shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet') of his endeavour to govern the nation by civil law and justice, and not by force; and that therefore he must watch them narrowly, and if they did again break out, he must not be deterred by a misplaced reverence of pity for their age, or the hope they could not do much harm in their few remain-

occasion, though, by God's providence, their failure was made to illustrate the political law as clearly as their success would have done. And though the student of history feels the same regret at this permanent disruption of what should have been organic, and mutually supporting, members of a one Hebrew commonwealth, as he does at the always frustrated hopes of a national unity in ancient Greece; yet, in the one case or the other, a deeper insight into what was possible in the then stage of the political growth and education of the human race, teaches us that the evil was the only condition on which it was practicable to secure the far greater good which was secured, and has become a part of the imperishable heritage of mankind. The experiments of Sparta, and even of Athens, and still more those of Macedon, and, above all, of Rome, show us that the problem of how to unite liberty with centralisation, could not be solved in that age. And so no doubt it was with the Hebrews; though their worship of One God at Jerusalem gave them facilities for true national unity, known nowhere else before the times of the Gospel. It has been observed that the scriptural account of the power of Solomon resembles, almost word for word, some of the paragraphs in the great inscriptions at Nimroud. 'Solomon reigned over the kingdoms from the river [Euphrates] unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought him presents . . . a rate year by year . . . and served Solomon all the days of his life. . . . He had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphseh even unto Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river.'* And when we thus see on what a pre-

ing years, from executing strict justice on them. Joab joined a conspiracy for deposing Solomon, and Shimei's reason for quitting the surveillance imposed on him, was believed by Solomon to be, and probably was, a pretext for a like course. Burke, who cultivated his love of justice, and hatred of all oppression, by the study of the Bible, and of real life and history, shows incidentally that he thus read this story of David, when (in one of his speeches on financial reform, I think) he warns his hearers that 'they must not spare the hoary head of inveterate abuse.' David did several very cruel as well as arbitrary acts: but we need not resign the use of our reason in reading the Bible, for fear men should call us superstitious.

* 1 Kings, iv. 21 and 24.; 2 Chron. ix. 24. 26. Quoted, with the above observation, by Mr. Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, p 635.

cipice Solomon stood, and what his descendants and their people might have become ; when we reflect what not only Israel, but the world would have been, if instead of a Bible we had had the annals of a race of Hebrew Sargons and Sennacheribs, and in the fulness of time a Kechama—an incarnation of evil—instead of a Son of God ; we shall perceive that, if ever man spoke by the Spirit of God, or did a deed for which all posterity should call him blessed, it was that flagrant radical and revolutionist the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite, who stirred up the young soldier Jeroboam to plot against his master Solomon, and openly and successfully to rebel against Rehoboam. At the same time, we must not overlook that this, like the other instances of prophets instigating rebellion, belongs to the earlier history of the nation : the later prophets habitually recognise that highest discovery of constitutional politics, that, in the maturer age of a commonwealth, all reforms can, and must, be effected by a discussion which, though absolutely refusing all restraint to its words, keeps steadily within the limits of the existing laws, till it can change them by the power of words alone. Of the increased clearness with which this momentous distinction is apprehended by our non-beneficed classes in England, we owe more than is usually acknowledged to Mr. Cobden, and his colleagues in the Anti-Corn Law Agitation. By precept, practice, and success, they have made the truth so popularly intelligible, that we may hope that it is as firmly established among us as the case admits of. For, in politics, as in every other region of human thought and action, it is not the mere establishment of maxims and traditions, however rational, but the presence of a moral and religious life in the honest and earnest application of these, which upholds a constitution.

The hope and promise of a reunion of the two houses of Israel, which Isaiah utters, are repeated by Ezekiel* : we cannot doubt that such a prospect must have animated the pious and the wise of the nation in each age : and the historians, in terms which show their own appreciation of events such as had not been ‘from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah,’

* Chapter xxxvii. 15—28.

describe a resort of persons from all parts of the northern kingdom to keep the passover at Jerusalem in the reigns of both Hezekiah and Josiah, followed by a general visitation of the cities not only of Judah and Benjamin, but also of 'Ephraim and Manasseh,' and 'Simeon even unto Naphthali,' for the purpose of purging the land of the altars, images, and groves of the false gods.* And from these statements of almost exclusively ecclesiastical historians we may infer, with little danger of being carried away by fancy, that there were corresponding facts in the civil condition of society; and that in the transient gleams of peace and prosperity which Judah experienced after the fall of Samaria and the Ephraimite monarchy, Jerusalem, and the throne, as well as the temple there, became the recognised seat of authority for such of the people of the Ten Tribes as had not been carried away by the Assyrians, and as preferred dwelling in towns or villages, with the habits of civilisation and of civil order, to those of mere pastoral families or tribes wandering in the desert at their own will. It was indeed but a feeble restoration of the times of David and Solomon, or even of the earlier commonwealth; yet perhaps a better state of things than seems to have prevailed from the days of Ezra to those of Christ, who proclaimed the fact of a deeper ground of unity than that of descent from Jacob, and of whose meeting with the woman of Samaria we may apply, in reference to this point, His saying, that a greater than Solomon was there.

Ephraim and Judah shall be at one; the Philistines and the Syrians, Edom, Moab, and Ammon, shall again become tributaries as they were in the best times of the monarchy: even the great nations of Egypt and Assyria shall give up their captives,—for in that day the LORD will not only dry up the Red Sea, as of old, but will extend the same power to the Euphrates, striking its deep streams into many shallow ones, and thus making a way for his people to return out of both these lands. *Pathros* is Thebais, or Upper Egypt; *Cush* is Ethiopia, and also Arabia Deserta, along the east coast of the Red Sea; *Elam* is Elymais, adjoining—and often used to include—Persia, as

* 2 Chron. xxx. 1. to xxxi. 1.; 2 Kings, xxiii. 1—23.; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 29. to xxxv. 18.

well as Susiana, and Media; *Shinar*, Babylonia; *Hamath*, a chief city of Syria; and the *Islands of the Sea* are the isles and coasts of the Mediterranean.

The Chronicles mention as a great national calamity the numbers of captives taken by the Syrians, Ephraimites, Edomites, and Philistines, during the reign of Ahaz.* Joel speaks of the Tyrians, Zidonians, and Philistines, selling the Jews to the Grecians†, and Amos seems to allude to a similar sale to the Edomites.‡ Isaiah refers elsewhere (chap. xvi. 4.) to Jews who had fled their own country to escape domestic or foreign oppression; and in the times of Jeremiah we have like instances.§ And comparing these and similar|| proofs of the practice of the Jews and their enemies with that of all the other nations of antiquity, we have abundant evidence—even if we are too cautious to adopt till after farther investigation the reading¶ of the Nineveh inscription, with Sennacherib's account of his having carried off the whole population which dwelled around Jerusalem—that during the reigns of Ahaz and his successor there was such a dispersion and captivity of the people as that from which Isaiah here promises the restoration. That the fulfilment of this promise in the succeeding reign of Hezekiah was most inadequate, must be evident to him who sets the outward possibilities of the occasion against the unbounded magnificence of the prophetic ideal: yet it need not be doubted that such a fulfilment as the case did admit, would have been brought about by the king, and the relations of those of his subjects, who were in exile or slavery: for in the latter years his reign, when 'many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth,' he would have been well able to demand the restoration of his people with effect. The reference to the Philistines may be compared with Sennacherib's statement that 'the nobles and the people of Ekron having expelled their king *Haddiya*, and the Assyrian troops who garrisoned the town, attached themselves to Heze-

* 2 Chron. xxviii. 5. 8. 17, 18., xxix. 9.

† Joel, iii. 6.

‡ Amos, i. 9.

§ Jeremiah, xli. xlii.

|| As 2 Kings, xv. 29., xvii. 6. 18.

¶ Rawlinson's *Outline*, p. 23. The translation of Dr. Hincks, as given by Mr. Layard (*Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 143.), is less distinct on this point.

kiah of Judæa, and paid their adorations to his God.’* The smiting the Euphrates into seven streams, Grotius, with his wonted clear and practical appreciation of fact and history, refers to the partial dismemberment of Assyria by the defection of the Medes and Chaldees, which, according to Herodotus, took place about the same time with Sennacherib’s retreat from the invasion of Judæa and Egypt: for the reconciliation of the Greek historian with the native records, we must wait till they are more thoroughly deciphered and translated.

The prophet finally concludes this prophecy, the structure of which we have so often paused to admire in its various parts, with a hymn, after the manner of those which, in the Book of Psalms, have these two thousand years been reckoned among the most precious treasures of men, women, and children, all over the world. It is a hymn of the restored church, which Isaiah puts into her mouth ‘in that day.’ I say the restored *church*, rather than the nation, because the whole matter as well as tone of the hymn — as indeed the name hymn would signify — marks that Church is the proper word here. It is as impossible to understand the history and literature of ancient Israel, as it is those of modern France, Germany, or England, if we are ignorant of, or do not duly appreciate, the presence and influence of the church in each. And by the church of the Hebrews I do not here mean their national and endowed priesthood, with its prescribed laws and rituals for national worship and education, and which are analogous to the like institution among ourselves; I speak of that spiritual brotherhood of which the ecclesiastical ‘estate of the realm’ in any nation is the proper symbol, and which embodies and expresses itself in and by that symbol in as far as it can; but which cannot limit itself to that or any other earthly form, because it is itself heavenly, and transcends all the partial and imperfect forms of earth, even when they are at their best, and still more so when (as often happens) they have become deeply, or even hopelessly, corrupted and decayed. This brotherhood has God for its father, and for its elder brother and head the Son of God, whom the beloved Apostle beheld in vision, while ‘ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands

* Rawlinson’s *Outline*, p. 23.

of thousands,' sang — 'Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.' And what St. John contemplated and declared with the eye and tongue of the old Hebrew seers, St. Paul has set forth in the language and by the methods of European philosophy; while the life and substance of the teaching of both is contained in the last discourses of their Master and ours, who said, 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' The world and the church are the two universal opposites: not the world merely in some particularly bad sense, but in all senses, good and bad; — the world which hates and resists the church with active enmity; the world which hinders the church by its indifference, selfishness, corruption, and decay; and also the world into which the church is in all ages infusing its own, or rather its Lord's, unworldly, heavenly spirit; which shall be at last entirely renewed by that spirit, and shall 'believe' that the church, and the Lord of the church, were indeed sent by the Father of all, that his Name may be glorified in and through all. This church, which Socrates and Plato hoped to find, and dwell in, after death*, but which Jesus Christ and his Apostles tell us, and we know — unless we shut our eyes to the truth — is actually

* "This law of degeneracy [according to Plato] exists in the commonwealths of the earth, just because they have not understood and steadfastly contemplated that original model, that perfect idea of a commonwealth, which is also the original model and perfect idea of a human character. It is a contradiction and absurdity then to allege the fact of this degeneracy as a proof that no such model is to be found. But after all these inquiries does the thought still linger about the mind, *where* is it to be found? Plato answers (book ix. p. fin.), 'Αλλ' ἐν οὐρανῷ ἵσως παράδειγμα ἀνέκεται τῷ βουλομένῳ ὁρᾶν καὶ ὁρᾶντι ἑαυτὸν κατοικίειν. Is it wonderful that such words should have suggested to some of the Christian fathers the recollection of those words in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which describe the hopes of the head of the covenanted people, 'Ἐξεδέχετο γὰρ τὴν τοὺς θεμελίου ἐχουσάν πόλιν ἧς τεχνίτης καὶ δημιουργὸς ὁ Θεός; or those which describe this hope as accomplished, 'Ἡμῶν τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει;'—Maurice's *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, pp. 153, 154. (2nd Edition.)

set up and open, upon earth, was to the Hebrew nation neither a mere future hope, nor a complete present possession. It was present, but present in the germ, and not in the fruit or flower. It deepened, sanctified, spiritualised their family relations, and their national life, literature, and worship; we see it pervading their traditions, history, laws, and the writings of their psalmists and prophets, and forming the channel through which God 'spake to them at sundry times and in divers manners;' but we see also that the prophets themselves, when most conscious of the reality of the divine Word and Spirit imparted to them, felt that they wanted something more, namely, a universal instead of a partial, occasional, measured, gift of the Spirit. 'The Holy Ghost was not yet given' (that is, not 'without measure,' as it is elsewhere expressed) 'because that Jesus was not yet glorified;' and therefore, though the prophets knew that their nation had really been based from the first upon God's covenant, and upheld by his presence as their LORD, still they felt that they needed 'a new covenant,' and looked forward to a day when the Lord should put his law in their hearts, and when they should no more have occasion to teach each other how to know the Lord, because not merely lawgivers, kings, and prophets, but the humblest peasant and child, should know Him for himself.* It may be said that we are even now no better off than they were, for it is the world and not the church which still predominates everywhere; and that we think ourselves happy if we can infuse some little spiritual life into corrupt and decayed family and national institutions, while the expectation of their perfect renewal by the presence and power of a universal and heavenly brotherhood set up among us here on earth, is but a hope for the remotest future, if even that. True; our Christian faith has sunk not merely to the level of the Jewish prophet, but to that of the Greek philosopher: we hope that perhaps we may find what we want in some other world after death. But the difference between them and us is that both of them believed and accepted all that it was given them to know, but we do not. The Kingdom of God *is* manifested among us, but we deny its presence. We deny it so-

* Jeremiah, xxxi. 31—34.

cially even when we seem to acknowledge it individually; and the consequent taint and curse of worldliness which pervades every thing, even our religion, can only be got rid of in proportion as our social as well as our individual life is renewed by faith in Christ, who, being the Head, is the source of life in all the relations which the members of the body have with one another.*

But while we recognise this distinction of the Jew from the Christian as well as from the Gentile, — that the first had the church, though yet in its germ and promise,—it does not follow that we are to disregard the various and successive stages of its development among the Jews themselves. And in this and the other earlier prophecies of Isaiah, we should go much against their actual language and tone, as well as against probability, if we supposed that the youthful patriot grown up in the prosperous reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, and having seen only two or three years of national calamity, was looking at things as Jeremiah looks at them in the passage quoted above, when a moral and material decay of many generations had brought the commonwealth to the lowest depression, and spiritual hope was stimulated by the utter despair of earth. It is more in accordance with all the facts to believe that Isaiah, when he puts this hymn in the mouth of the remnant of the LORD's people, recovered from the four corners of the earth, was anticipating such a restoration of the national church as he did witness a few years after, in the reign of the pious Hezekiah, — a restoration which consisted not merely in the re-opening the temple, and re-establishing the daily worship and the yearly festivals, but much more in the humble, holy, devout spirit of repentance, hope, and faith, in which the king and people confessed before God that it was for their sins that 'their fathers had fallen by the sword, and their sons, and their daughters, and their wives, were in captivity;' and that they now 'turned again to Him, the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, believing that He would return to the remnant of them who were escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria, and that their brethren and

* The reader will see that I have followed Coleridge's exposition of the relation of the universal to a national church, in his essay on Church and State.

their children would find compassion before them that led them captive, so that they should come again into their own land, because the LORD their God was gracious and merciful, and would not turn away his face from them, if they returned to Him.* The historical narrative is indeed a striking counterpart of the prophecy; the influence of the man who uttered the latter is manifest in the proceedings chronicled by the former; and each makes the other a thoroughly intelligible and coherent portion of one history.

The Talmudists refer the words, 'With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation,' to the custom of making an oblation of water on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, when a priest fetched water in a golden pitcher from the fountain of Siloah, and poured it mixed with wine on the morning sacrifice as it lay on the altar: while at the evening offering the same was done amidst shouts of joy from the assembled people. It was in obvious allusion to this rite that, 'in the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink;' but as it is not prescribed in the law of Moses, it has been doubted whether it dates back earlier than the times of the Maccabees. It is, however, at least as probable that the Asmonean princes should have restored an ancient, as ordained a new rite: such a rite, to acknowledge God's gift of the water without which harvest and vintage must have failed, would always have been a likely accompaniment of the feast in which these were celebrated; and the like acts of Samuel and Elijah, though for different purposes, perhaps go in confirmation of the ancient existence of such a practice.† Be this as it may, the idea conveyed by the image of the living water will be the same: — 'Such as is the refreshment of water from the spring, and from the clouds of heaven, to the parched lips and the thirsty land, in this our sultry climate, such shall be the refreshment to your spirit in that day from the salvation of the LORD. He shall dwell among you, and His Spirit shall be a well of life to the whole nation.'

* 2 Chronicles, xxix. xxx. xxxi.

† 1 Samuel, vii. 6.; 1 Kings, xix. 33—35.

CHAPTER IX.

ISAIAH XIII., XIV.—GENUINENESS OF THE PROPHECIES ON BABYLON.—SCÉPTICAL CRITICISM—ITS ORIGIN AND PROGRESS—NOT POSITIVE OR CONSTRUCTIVE.—ORTHODOX CRITICISM.—RESULTS OF THE CONTROVERSY.—TRADITIONAL COMMENTS CONFOUNDED WITH THE TEXT.—HEBREW HISTORICAL NOTICES OF BABYLON—ASSYRIAN NOTICES.—BABYLON SACKED IN ISAIAH'S TIME BY PERSIANS, AND PERHAPS BY MEDES.—BABYLON A DIAGRAM OR IDEOGRAPH.—ARGUMENTS FROM STYLE.—SUSPENSE BETTER THAN HASTY DECISION.—FINAL OVERTHROW OF THE EMPIRE OF FORCE.

‘THE burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amos did see.’ A number of learned modern commentators of Germany maintain that the ‘higher criticism,’ as they name it, has ascertained this title to be spurious, and the prophecy at the head of which it stands, as well as several others in the book, and especially chapters xl. to lxvi., to have been written towards the end of the great Babylonish Captivity. But this ‘higher criticism’ is not the constructive criticism by which a Niebuhr and a Grote have restored the political histories of Rome and Greece; but that negative, eighteenth-century criticism, that ‘victorious analysis,’ which Niebuhr taught us how to escape from, or rather to make our servant instead of our master. And if it still asserts its power in the region of biblical literature, and especially in the question of the genuineness of the writings of Isaiah, it is not the less on the eve of becoming obsolete here as elsewhere, in that respect in which it most prides itself. For antiquarian research, sceptical questioning, skilful anatomy, refutation of the credulous or fraudulent figments of writers or commentators, and for sweeping away by these means every kind of accumulated rubbish, the negative criticism is, and will continue to be, invaluable, not only to other students, but to the student of the Bible, in as far as it is applicable to his subject-matter. But the mechanical and logical arrangements by which it proposes to frame a substitute for what it has, or supposes it has, destroyed, are now understood not to be really constructive in the sense which science demands, and declares possible. It does not discover the law in the simpler facts, and

then explain the more complicated facts by that law: but it starts with a theory, and makes the facts fit this theory by learned and ingenious adaptations, or if they are quite intractable, rejects them, declaring that it has a 'critical feeling' that they are not genuine. It is no jest to say that '*Tant pis pour les faits*' is one of its main arguments. But we want facts, and laws, not speculations; and therefore this speculative criticism, though it may dress itself in the newest fashion of philosophy, cannot maintain its ground, except because there is nothing better to take its place. It bears the same relation to the really scientific criticism which a thoughtful student of the Bible so greatly longs for, as the speculations of the '*Vestiges of Creation*' do to the positive sciences of which the foundations are slowly but surely laid in the observations and inductions of a Herschel, a Lyell, a Pritchard, or a Latham. The difference between science and theory is finally established, and henceforth the latter has only to give way before the former, and that in moral and religious no less than in physical inquiry. Into the general question of the relation of the so-called orthodox and rationalist* systems of biblical criticism to each other, and to that scientific method which we have still to wait for, this is not the place to enter; but as to the point immediately under consideration, the state of the case seems to be this: —

In 1786 Bishop Lowth published his work on Isaiah, in which, while he recognised the ordinary orthodox views of prophecy, it was his main object to exhibit Isaiah as a poet not inferior to the great classical models, and to remove the obstacles to his being duly appreciated as such, partly by literary illustrations, and partly by a new translation in which many real errors or obscurities of the authorised version were avoided, while the whole was made to assume a form more in accordance with classical, or supposed classical, canons. The last point he endeavoured to attain by a free use of conjectural emendations — his own, and those of ancient versions or modern scholars — of the

* Convenient as these terms are for making a general statement, I should have feared to countenance, by the use of them, the base practice of pointing arguments with nicknames; but I find them employed as honourable titles, — the one by Dr. Alexander, in the Introduction to his *Commentary*, p. xxxi.; and the other by M. Bunsen, in *Hippolytus and his Age*, i. 164.

text, in places of which it was not then seen that they were already in harmony with the canons of Hebrew, and often even of English taste, and could only be injured by being altered. And though these particular conjectures were soon set aside by Hebrew scholars, as wanting alike in authority and probability, yet the spirit of them would not so easily die, for it was that which animated the whole criticism of the age. Lowth had employed himself in making it clear that Isaiah was a real poet: certain of his German cotemporaries and successors proposed to prove that he was a real patriot, politician, and man of flesh and blood, like Socrates, or Cicero, or the men of the eighteenth century itself. Not that the orthodox commentators denied, or did not recognise, these characteristics of the Hebrew prophet. But these commentators were men, many of whom, if not all, had learnt by personal experience that they had a nearer and deeper interest in the words of Isaiah than in those of any patriot or politician, ancient or modern; and they had accepted the common explanation of this experience of the whole Church, as well as themselves,—‘that Isaiah was inspired, and his prophecies a part of the revelation of God to man:’ and, moreover, they had adopted, and were employing all their learning and ingenuity to maintain, the notion—in former times floating vaguely on the surface of a deeper and truer belief, but now reduced to a coherent system—that not only was ‘all Scripture given by inspiration,’ but that (contrary to the constant declaration of Scripture itself) inspiration was confined to the writers of Scripture, and consisted not in the perpetual presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the church, and in each member of the church, but mainly and eminently, though not entirely, in special miraculous (by which they meant arbitrary) communications from God through the prophet or apostle, who was himself little more than a mechanical instrument for the purpose. And, therefore, while such commentators as the great Vitranga gave a predominance to the religious and Christian interest of Isaiah’s prophecies, to which it can only be objected that it is shown apart from their national and human interest, instead of in the entire union in which the two stand together in the prophecies themselves, we find them maintaining that these prophecies are full of miraculous predictions of future events, which

could only have been made known to the prophet because God had seen fit to suspend or supersede the laws of nature and the human mind for the occasion. Here, then, came in the neological or rationalist critics, who replied, — that a more extensive and accurate, as well as a less prejudiced, examination and comparison of the literature, antiquities, history, philosophy of the Hebrews and of other nations, would show that a great part of the phenomena in question, including those of the writer's own belief in spiritual and divine influences and interpositions, were merely human and ordinary, and such as were habitually recognised to be so by these very orthodox commentators if found in classical or modern history : — that they admitted that there still remained a large number of predictions of future events in the book of Isaiah, which could not be thus disposed of, but that here the art of the 'higher criticism,' by which the commentator trained to its exercise could decide what were and what were not the genuine works of an author, however ancient, was available : — that this criticism did in fact set aside all the positive, matter-of-fact, evidence which the document itself offers, and decide that all the supposed miraculous predictions of Isaiah were written either after the event, or when it was so close at hand as to be cognisable by an acute observer, and might therefore, be confidently ascribed, not to Isaiah, but to a writer or writers living in Babylon towards the end of the captivity, who imitated his style more or less successfully, and whose works were presently assumed and maintained to be his, either in order to give greater weight to his promises and warnings by a venial, or perhaps commendable fraud, or else through the ignorance or carelessness of copyists, their deficiency of separate parchments, or other accidents which the critical tact of the several commentators and readers might prefer to suppose : — while, lastly, the assertion that the words of the prophet do actually reveal to the Christian a knowledge of God and of His will, not otherwise discoverable, the rationalist, except in as far as he explained or got rid of it by the foregoing arguments, passed in silence, like the German translation, or abridgment, of Vitringa, 'aus welcher alle die ungeniessbaren mystischen Erklärungen weggefallen sind.' But this practice of ignoring facts, whether historical, or those facts of consciousness which supply so large a part of

the materials of any tolerable philosophy of human life, cannot, as the sceptic always fancies, stop just where he pleases. His whole mind is influenced by it, and accordingly his views of Hebrew and other national politics and literature not only require the support of innumerable theories and conjectures, but they are after all unsatisfactory from their narrowness. Vitranga, with all his 'unpalatable mystical interpretations,' is less of a mere book-student than Gesenius, and knows more what a flesh and blood man is like.

No one, indeed, can bring a charge of narrowness or superficiality against Ewald, who has thrown more light upon the real nature of prophecy than any one, except our own countryman Maurice; yet this makes it the more instructive to see how, in all these questions of criticism, his 'shaping spirit of imagination' is so strong, that its creations have to him all the reality of historical facts. Thus, on the subject before us, he says *, that though we cannot trace the history of the existing collections of the prophecies, by external evidence, yet we may, by help of that which is internal or derived from analogy, arrive at some extremely weighty truths, which present themselves to us as scattered marks and vestiges of that history. And then he proceeds to give, not some of those general and philosophical views in which he is such a master, but a series of historical, or quasi-historical, statements as to the period at the end of the exile of which we have no 'external' accounts. He says, that 'at that time a multitude of new prophecies, often of great poetical beauty, and written, as it were, on thousands of flying sheets, were published and collected; and that it is easy to understand how this flood of new writings soon made it seem expedient to make and circulate new selections of the most important of the old works on prophecy.' And he then gives, in great detail, a narrative of the steps by which one of these selectors arranged the Book of Isaiah as we now have it, even pointing out two little passages which the said selector ('whom one may easily give credit for being something of an author himself'), added to give a finish to certain sections of the work. Parts of this narrative are qualified with such words as 'probably,' 'easily conceived,' &c., but others are not less supported by the counter-

* *Die Propheten*, i. 55-60.

vailing 'manifestly,' or 'undeniably;' and the whole is such a statement of events which happened, without being recorded, 2200 years ago, as no Englishman would venture to make, with all the documents before him, of the manner in which the works of any author of his own generation were composed and arranged. Ewald has (as his readers know) farther employed this supposed power of recovering the past, in re-arranging the whole of the Prophets as well as the Psalms, as they 'must' have been, and has printed his versions accordingly. I point out these things, not from any disposition to carp at this wise and good man, nor even for their interest to the student of the national distinctions of the human mind, but because I believe that we must understand them, in order to understand this question of the Isaian, or non-Isaian, authorship of these chapters. For he must be very ignorant and conceited who is not often ready to think that these Germans are so wise, and their insight so deep, that we ought to take their authority on this point, though their arguments seem so inconclusive. And such instances as that above, explain clearly what are the proper limits of the Germans' authority, and where we must begin to judge for ourselves. They offer us diamonds and glass beads as of equal value: we may know the difference, though they alone know where to find the former.*

The controversy, however, has not been without fruit, and it promises more hereafter. The opposite and equally arbitrary modes of appealing on every difficulty either to a miracle, or to a supposition that the text ought to be what it is not, will be seen to be alike unnecessary in order to explain the facts of the case, when we have learnt how to look at those facts in a stronger and clearer light, derived from a deeper knowledge of

* M. Bunsen says, "Modern criticism has been left to the Germans, for whom reality has no charm." And of "the Protestant critical school in Germany," he adds — "what they know how to handle best is thought, the ideal part of history; what is farthest from their grasp is reality." — *Hippolytus and his Age*, ii. 228. 239. I do not mean to say that M. Bunsen would make my application of his maxims.

If it is said that even the Germans think Ewald fanciful, I would reply that, in this question of the genuineness of Isaiah's writings, Gesenius and Hitzig are quite as regardless of fact and evidence, and quite as hypothetical, as Ewald.

the laws according to which God has both created men, and is still ruling and guiding them, both as to their inward and their outward life. It is impossible to glance at the progress of this controversy during the last sixty or seventy years, without seeing the marked approaches that have been made on both sides towards a union on the common ground of a positive theology and criticism. On the one hand we are learning that in proportion as we can discover the law of God's working in events where our predecessors only saw His power, and can, consequently, perceive the resemblances between God's former and present manner of governing the world where they saw chiefly the differences, this does not dishonour but honour God, and instead of weakening our recognition of the reality of God's presence and power in our own souls, does in truth add a new and stronger evidence of it to ourselves and to others. And, meanwhile, we have been discovering on the other side, that, in order to sustain the assertion that the Hebrew prophet was a real poet, orator, patriot, and man, we must get some higher and more catholic standard of what poetry, oratory, patriotism, and manhood are, than the stunted specimens of student or town life in the eighteenth century, or indeed any other century, could supply us with; and it is now becoming plain that these efforts to realise the human character of prophecy will not stop in their ever-increasing demands for a higher standard, till they have found how to apply that ideal of perfect manhood which St. Paul calls 'the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

The traditional and orthodox interpretation of the chapters before us is, that they are a specific prediction of the taking of Babylon by the Medes and Persians about two hundred years after the words were uttered by Isaiah; and it is confidently added that the historical events are anticipated with such accuracy of detail as can only be explained by miracle. The rationalists admit the fact of these precise historical details, but maintain that they prove not a miracle, but that the real date of the prophecy is contemporary with the events. Whereas the thoughtful reader, who examines the text as it is in itself, and not through the medium of traditions and conjectures, will, I am bold to say, find no such specific predictions and historical details.

There is just the same profound insight into political princi-

ples, the same acquaintance with the general political relations of the foreign nations, and the same foresight of their consequences, which Isaiah exhibits in the prophecies admitted to be his ; and there is the same absence of literal detail, or the same evidence that the detail is not historical but ideal, from its *not* corresponding precisely with actual events. The proofs of miraculous prediction exist only in the mind of the commentators, who have endeavoured to confirm the great truth that Isaiah is a prophet, and filled with that ‘spirit of wisdom and understanding’ which he prized as being the ‘Spirit of the LORD,’ by trivial fancies of their own, which lower him towards the level of the muttering wizards whom he denounced. Grotius, indeed, saw better, and connected this, like the rest of Isaiah’s prophecies, with cotemporary events. And it would be hard to understand why the rationalists were not content to do the same, if we did not remember that, when they first entered on the subject, their conception of the human side of prophecy was so limited that they could only explain such passages as the vision in the sixth chapter, and the march of the Assyrian army in the tenth, by supposing them to be the one an apologue, and the other an historical statement ; and that, though their views have been gradually enlarging, they have still, like other commentators, what may be called a professional and unconscious prejudice in favour of the traditions handed down to them. This habit of accepting traditional comments as if they were a part of the text, is common with rationalist no less than orthodox writers, on every part of the Bible, and has, if I mistake not, on this occasion, led to the taking for granted, first, the orthodox assumption, and then the rationalist explanation of it ; though each is contrary to the plain facts of the text. If there are obscurities and difficulties, this is only what might be expected in a book of such antiquity, and with such small remains of cotemporary history to throw light on its allusions ; and in the present state of our knowledge, it may be necessary to leave some of them unexplained, or to explain them conjecturally. But that they need such slashing criticism, or that its employment does not involve us in greater difficulties than it helps us out of, I am unable to see. If the text is corrupt, let it be emended ; but let us see what it is, and what

it ought to be, each distinctly, and not blended together in a luminous mist of the higher criticism. And let us remember that what it ought to be is not to be ascertained by deciding how we, here in England, in the nineteenth century, should have written it, or in what form it would be most easily intelligible to us; for the probability is rather that such would not have been the precise form in which a Hebrew prophet would have written between two and three thousand years ago.

Whatever difficulty appears in verses 1, 2, 3, 4. of chapter xiv., has, I think, been solved by anticipation, in accepting verses 10, 11, 12. of chapter xi., as the genuine and intelligible words of Isaiah: only, that in the passage now before us, the captivity from which the people of Israel are to be brought back is said to be endured in Babylon, and at the hands of the king of Babylon; whereas, in the times of Isaiah, the head of the Assyrian empire was usually called king of Assyria, and lived at Nineveh, and Babylon was a dependency, under his viceroy or vassal-king. Here, as the student of the question knows, lies the real difficulty, to which all the others are but make-weights; unless, indeed, he suspects that the spuriousness of these chapters is itself desired as a make-weight to that of the latter half of the book. To this then let us address ourselves, by examining the text as it is, and not as it ought to be.

The prophecy, as it is, then, consists of chap. xiii. and the first twenty-seven verses of chap. xiv., its termination being marked by the title of the next prophecy, as its commencement is by its own title, which states that it is by Isaiah the son of Amos; while its position in the book indicates its date to be towards the end of the reign of Ahaz. In the last words (verse 25.) of the prophecy, the impending destruction of the great Assyrian power is foretold in language corresponding with that in which Isaiah had constantly on previous occasions denounced the same heathen oppressor; while the rest of the denunciation, though perfectly congruous with this its own close, differs from those previous prophecies in calling the oppressor 'king of Babylon,' and foretelling the overthrow of that his capital, whereas, they call him 'king of Assyria,' and speak only of his army being destroyed. Isaiah's authority for a cotemporary historical fact, is as good as that of any other record of his times. If the

latter contradict and disprove a statement purporting to be from him, we must balance the evidence and decide accordingly: but the mere absence of confirmatory statements would not throw doubt on the genuineness of an allusion by Isaiah to a fact, probable in itself, and uncontradicted, even though our resources for confirmation or contradiction were not so fragmentary as they are. And, therefore, in the absence of contradiction, sound criticism will decide, that if Isaiah in one place calls the oppressor of Israel 'king of Assyria,' and in another 'king of Babylon,' it was because he either called himself by both these titles, or at least was significantly pointed out to the prophet's own countrymen by the latter name; and that if Isaiah sometimes describes the Jews as carried captives into various lands, and sometimes as living in slavery at Babylon, it was because a large proportion of the captives taken in the time of Ahaz or of Hezekiah, had fallen into the hands of the luxurious and cruel inhabitants of that city. The only known fact in opposition to those necessarily involved in these expressions of Isaiah is, that Nineveh was the capital of Tiglath-Pileser and his successors: but there is no absolute contradiction or incompatibility between the two; it would be more correct to say that we have two statements which stand apart from each other, and in apparent opposition, and to which our meagre and fragmentary historical records supply no third statement which might reconcile the others, in the way in which a third statement so often does in all histories. Probable and approximate evidence, indeed, we have. Micah, the contemporary of Isaiah, makes Babylon, and not Nineveh, the city to which the daughter of Zion shall be led captive.* Babylon was one of the cities from which inhabitants were supplied to the cities of Israel, and to which therefore the Israelites were deported, in the sixth year of Hezekiah.† Babylon, though at this time inferior to Nineveh, inasmuch as the latter was the seat of the government, seems to have been the right arm of the Assyrian king, its palaces inhabited by his chief princes, and its vast population recruiting his armies, and consequently shar-

* Micah, iv. 10., which Gesenius refers to in his chronological table as proof that the Assyrian kings sent their prisoners to Babylon at this time.

† 2 Kings, xvii. 23, 24.

ing largely in the treasures and the captives of the countries they helped to conquer. It had apparently an importance something like that of Delhi during the reigns of those Mogul emperors who lived at Agra, or of Edinburgh and Dublin in our own time*; and it was, in truth, as its earlier and later history shows, the more permanent of the two centres of the great Mesopotamian empires. The traditions of its origin, of the nations that had sprung from it, and of the meaning of its name, gave it a special importance in the eyes of Isaiah and the people he addressed, as the type and embodiment of worldly arbitrary power, in contrast with the spiritual and law-governed kingdom of the LORD: and, therefore, he might well name it (in a fashion of which we shall have other instances) †, instead of Nineveh, which he never mentions, and of which his non-mention, when he denounces so many other cities, would be a great puzzle, but for this explanation of it; for he must have known that the great king of Assyria had a city as well as an army. To use an illustration now become familiar to us, 'Babylon' is a monogram or ideograph, employed by Isaiah to represent the capital of the Assyrian empire. And so the Euphrates, not the Tigris, is the river which is to overflow the land of Immanuel‡: it was to Babylon, not to Nineveh, that Isaiah warned Hezekiah that his sons and wealth would be carried; Babylon, not Nineveh, supplies the forces which besiege Tyre§; and to those who are content to take the text as it is, I may further quote the denunciations of Babylon, in chapter xxi., and the latter half of the book. So adduced, they are facts supporting the fact before us: in the other mode of employing them, they are parts of an argument in a circle, in which the hypothesis as to the

* Compare, too, the following: — "The preponderance of the Persians was at last complete; though the Medes always continued to be the second nation in the empire, after the Persians, properly so called; and by early Greek writers the great enemy in the East is often called 'the Mede,' as well as 'the Persian.' Ekbatana always continued to be one of the capital cities, and the usual summer residence of the kings of Persia; Susa on the Choaspes, on the Kissian plain farther southward, and east of the Tigris, being their winter abode." — Grote's *History of Greece*, iv. 251. "*Medising*, i. e. embracing the cause of the Persians." — Ibid. v. 77.

† Chapters xxv. 10, and xxxiv. 5, 6, where see farther.

‡ Isaiah, vii. 20. viii. 7, 8.

§ Isaiah, xxiii. 13.

meaning or origin of those chapters sustains the like hypothesis as to this one ; and the former in its turn does the like service for the latter.

And though the decipherment of the Assyrian annals themselves is still in its infancy, and it would therefore be rash to draw final conclusions from them, yet the (partly independent) versions or summaries, of Colonel Rawlinson and Dr. Hincks, do present so many statements in corroboration of this which I call Isaiah's own account (and this without any suspicion on the part of these learned men that they were supplying such corroboration, and therefore with the probable omission of details which might be of much importance for our purpose) that it is difficult to conceive that the correspondences are illusory, and not historical. They are to this effect : — The king who built the north-west palace at Nimroud records that, on taking a city which 'is particularly described as one of considerable importance,' he imprisoned its king 'in Babylon.' Sargon styles himself 'the great king, the king of Assyria, and the lord paramount (or the high-priest) of Babylon,' as kings both before and after him seem to have done : yet he did not take this addition till the twelfth year of his reign, when he turned upside down the pavement slabs of his palace, and inscribed the name of Babylon among his own titles, and that of the Babylonian Nebo in a conspicuous place in the series of gods to whom the palace was newly dedicated, both having been previously wanting. And at this date his annals say that he conquered and expelled Merodach-Baladan, who had been twelve years *de facto* king of Babylon, where Sargon thenceforth reigned in his own or his son's name, till near his death. Sargon's most important campaigns 'were against Susiana and Elymais, and against Babylonia and Chaldæa, which countries were evidently very closely connected ;' and in his last year he mentions that he carried off the gold, silver, and valuable property of the seven kings in Yetnan (which Rawlinson supposes to be the region between Egypt and Phœnicia) to Babylon, because they refused to pay their accustomed tribute. On, or just before, the death of Sargon, Merodach-Baladan, with the help of allies from Susiana or Elam, recovered Babylon ; but was speedily driven out again by Sennacherib, who

plundered Babylon, as well as all 'the fortresses of the Chaldæans,' carrying away gold, silver, and precious stones, gods, men, and women, chariots, horses, camels, and mules, 'altogether a vast booty.' Sennacherib then appointed a viceroy (his brother according to Berosus), at Babylon: he had to reconquer it a second time from Merodach-Baladan, in his fourth year; when he appointed his son Assur-Nadin (Asordanius in Berosus) as his viceroy.* Berosus relates a conquest of Babylon by the Medes, and a subsequent dynasty of Chaldæan kings, long before these times: he also calls Pul and Merodach-Baladan, Chaldæans†: and the constant appearance of the 'Chaldæans' in all the Cuneiform inscriptions will, I presume, end the doubts (the nature of which I do not understand) as to the historical existence of this race in the days of Isaiah, and will allow us to adopt the simple and straightforward conclusions on the subject, of Gesenius on chapter xxiii. 13. And we shall then be able to say in elucidation of the mention of the Chaldees in the prophecy before us, that if, at no distant period — shortly followed, or perhaps marked, by the commencement of the era of Nabonassar, B.C. 747 — the Chaldæan mountaineers had been transplanted from Armenia into Babylon, where they would adopt its civilisation and share its wealth, while they supplied new vigour and military importance to the old city, that city might, without impropriety, have been called 'the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency,' by Isaiah, though we doubt how far he was conscious that his impassioned words would be still more applicable to a great Chaldæan dynasty afterwards to arise at Babylon, than to the events he saw or anticipated in his own day.

So too of the fulfilment of the prophecy:—Grotius said, that if the Assyrian annals of Abydenus, and the Babylonian of Berosus were extant, we should find that between

* Hincks, in *Transactions of the Irish Academy*, xxii. pt. 2., p. 40: pt. 4., p. 364. ff.: and in Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, pp. 140. 353. 620. Rawlinson's *Outline*, pp. 19. 25, 26.; Rawlinson's *Commentary* (1850), p. 67. A comparison of the places quoted will show that I have merely put the translators' own last conclusions into juxta-position with their earlier ones, without mixing any theory of my own.

† Bunsen's *Vet. Script. Fragmenta*, appended to *Aegyptens Stelle*, iii.

the times of Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar, the woes here denounced against Babylon did in effect come to pass, through some invasion or invasions of the Medes, who about this date became independent of Assyria, and very powerful, under Deioces and his successor. And now the originals of those annals tell us, that Merodach-Baladan wrested Babylon, once at least, from each of the kings Sargon and Sennacherib; and that in both instances he did it by help of an army from Elam (or Susa), which nation is joined by Isaiah, in chapter xxi., with the Mede, as the destined conquerors of Babylon, while Media appears in juxta-position with Elam among the conquests of both Sargon and Sennacherib, the latter going to invade the Medes immediately after his second defeat of Merodach-Baladan, and indicating their power by the notice that none of his ancestors had received tribute from them as he had done.* Let us put these things together, and remember what a great and rich city Babylon was, and in what fashion it would be sacked by Merodach-Baladan, and his 'Susianian allies:' let us consider that a great part of the same inhabitants who suffered on these occasions because they were the subjects of the great king, would be treated but little better when he found them with their allegiance transferred to his rival: and then we shall be able to judge what farther information we require, in order to decide whether it is impossible that Isaiah could have written the words before us. If Colonel Rawlinson's belief that Sargon was a usurper, who expelled the dynasty of Tiglath-Pileser by a military revolution, should be substantiated when the evidence is complete, this would have been of itself a striking fulfilment of Isaiah's denunciations, whether the literal Babylon or only the empire which it symbolised to the Jew, were subverted on the occasion: the position of the prophecy in the book would indicate its date to be in Tiglath-Pileser's reign. In any case, we need not limit ourselves so much as Grotius does: it is not necessary to assume that this prophecy was fulfilled more literally and definitely than many others of which we have the historical counterpart, and see that they were far from having such a literal fulfilment. It is improbable that Babylon was utterly

* Rawlinson's *Outline*, pp. 18, 19, 20, 25.; and *Commentary*, p. 61.: Hincks, in *Layard's Nineveh and Babylon*, pp. 140. 142. 145.

destroyed between Sennacherib's overthrow and the restoration of the empire by his son Esarhaddon; but it is a fact that it was not so destroyed by Cyrus, but perished by a decay extending through centuries. In order to enter into the spirit of Hebrew prophecy, and understand its meaning, we must consider that the prophet is enunciating universal propositions, but that instead of employing generalisations and abstractions, as we moderns would do, he takes Babylon, or Moab, or Edom, or Israel, in the concrete, and uses this concrete image as the diagram by which to illustrate his proposition. The diagram is sometimes more, sometimes less, accurately drawn, according to the knowledge or skill of the individual prophet; but he who looks for the meaning and truth of the prophecy in the literal correspondence of some historical event, falls into the same kind of error as the school-boy who tries to prove a proposition of Euclid by measuring the parts of the diagram, and cannot apprehend how the proposition itself is equally true, and equally important, whether the circles and lines are drawn with ruler and compasses, or by the most awkward hand.

Isaiah looked on the main fortress of that kingdom of Force, which it was the mission of his life to denounce, as the really impotent rival of the kingdom of Righteousness, though the instrument for punishing the nations, and especially the LORD's chosen nation, for their rebellions against His laws. He knew that numbers of his countrymen (of Israel and of Judah) were at that moment the slaves of the cruel and luxurious Babylonians, and he may have anticipated that still more of the like punishment would be inflicted on those who yet remained in their own land. But he was appointed to preach not only judgment, but pardon and release, to his people: and while he meditated upon the events of his times, and of the times before him, and studied them in the light of that vision which had revealed to him the LORD of hosts, and the reality of His dominion, he saw, — not by miracle, but by that insight into the principles governing the rise and fall of empires, which was a higher and more spiritual gift of God to him than any such miraculous power could have been,—that the Assyrian dominion would be overthrown by the less degenerate and more warlike

nations from the north, who neither cared for gold, nor spared children, and whom, with his wonted concreteness of style, he here specifies as the Medes, and in chapter xxi. as the Medes and Persians: he saw that this Babylon, with all it symbolised, would be utterly destroyed, and the Jewish nation completely freed from its bondage. He saw all this in its idea, and accordingly set it forth in all the greatness and absoluteness of the idea; while he believed that he himself should see such an accomplishment of it as was suited to his own times, that the successor of Ahaz would reign in righteousness over a people delivered from the thralldom of Assyria and Babylon, and that Babylon would meanwhile be humbled to the dust. But only a small part this idea could be possibly embodied in any single set of historical facts. Only in the course of ages could the whole idea be evolved: there was much more of it brought out in the days of Cyrus than in the time of Hezekiah; but still the discovery was but partial, and the accomplishment had — nay has — still to go on. It is not necessary for me to add to the above notices of the Assyrian annals, an abstract and reconciliation of what remains to us of the history of Assyria and Babylon. In Vitringa, Prideaux, Gesenius, Winer, and Kitto, or in their original authorities, the student must necessarily examine the subject at large, and for himself: my ambition is only to help him to remove some obstacles which, if I mistake not, stand in his way. And I would ask him to judge for himself, and without waiting for leave from any commentators, whether, taking the text as it is, and interpreting its historical allusions by the ordinary methods and rules of criticism, and availing himself of such information as the remaining historical records supply, the state of things, internal and external — ideas and facts — supposed in the present prophecy is, or is not, something to the effect above stated.

As to the arguments against the genuineness of these chapters, which are drawn from their style and diction, I would observe that it does not require a knowledge of Hebrew to enable the reader to put the case, and to judge what would be the possible results; just as a lawyer can form a reasonable conclusion in an ecclesiastical or commercial inquiry, though he is neither a clergyman nor a merchant. It will stand thus:—

We have before us the small remains of the literature of a nation whose habits of thought, and therefore of writing, are removed from ours by the distance of 2500 years, and of Asia from Europe, and of all the differences therein implied; the language in which this literature was produced, and in which it still exists, became a dead language about 2300 years ago; and the books themselves have been preserved in their present form, and with the usual discrepancies of ancient manuscripts, through times in which the nation had so little life that it lost all its original histories, and appears to have saved the books it has, because they were habitually used in religious worship, and therefore must have been at the same time liable to such modernisations as books in popular use do not escape, even in our days of printing. And the question is whether, with the very limited means of comparison which such, and such small, remains of the literature afford, it is possible for certain very learned Hebraists to pronounce that the short prophecy before us was written not 2500, but 2300 years ago; because, as they assert—while other eminent, if not equal, scholars deny—they find five or six words* or phrases belonging to the later period, and the style more flowing than that of the prophecies which they (with much disagreement among themselves on this point, however,) admit to be those of Isaiah? Could any of us, at the interval of little more than 200 years, decide such a question on such grounds, even as to a passage in the works of our own countryman, Shakspeare? Should we not think a ‘By W. S.’ in an old title-page, of far more help than all our higher criticism? If we had nothing but *a priori* reasoning to guide us as to the genuineness of these chapters of Isaiah, we should have to say

* Gesenius specifies *five*, besides some grammatical usages; and Hitzig *four* others, adopting only one of those of Gesenius, from which I conclude that he gives the rest up. Some of his own are plainly of no weight: and there is ample counter-criticism, of which the reader will find accounts in Dr. Alexander’s work. Let me mention too, the authority of Vitranga, who, without suspecting that a doubt on the subject would ever be raised, says that he can recognise the style of his author in every line of his writings. He may be credulous, but credulity is in itself no more superficial and inaccurate than scepticism; and Vitranga’s deep religious spirit gives him a sympathy with the prophet, and a consequent power of judging on the point in question (that of Isaiah’s genuine style), which the sceptical critics cannot pretend to.

with a great authority on a like subject: 'The lesson must be learnt, hard and painful though it be, that no imaginable reach of critical acumen will, of itself, enable us to discriminate fancy from reality, in the absence of a tolerable stock of evidence: '* but Isaiah's historical reality is not lost like Homer's, in the mist of ages; he stands as completely within the historical period as Demosthenes or Cicero; his name is on all the old, genuine, title-pages, and only omitted in the modern, spurious, ones; and criticism has merely to decide the negative point, whether it is *impossible* that these passages in a book thus historically ascribed to Isaiah, can have been written by him. On the other hand, let me direct the reader's attention to the various passages in the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, in which the resemblances are such as can only arise from one having quoted or imitated the other; and ask him to consider whether the relation of original and copyist, which exists in the case of the prophecies in which it is admitted that Jeremiah holds the latter place, does appear to be reversed in the case of those in which, on the neological theory, he is assumed to be the original. For while I believe that no positive conclusion from such exercises of the 'higher criticism' are to be set against the external evidence of existing texts, it seems to me not unfair to ask what is the negative result of such an inquiry: namely, whether Jeremiah's prophecy against Moab has the appearance of a mere composition of thoughts and images, without the complete unity of the other prophecy, which is admitted to be the older, even by those who deny it to be by Isaiah; and whether, on the contrary, Jeremiah's denunciation of Babylon† indicates the unity of an original work, while the various prophecies attributed to Isaiah on the same subject show signs of being derived from that source.

* Mr. Grote, on the Unity of the Iliad and Odyssey — *History of Greece*, ii. p. 171. And farther on (p. 217.), he says, "The point" [Homeric unity] "is thus still under controversy among able scholars, and is probably destined to remain so: for, in truth, our means of knowledge are so limited, that no man can produce arguments sufficiently cogent to contend against opposing preconceptions; and it creates a painful sentiment of diffidence, when we read the expressions of equal and absolute persuasion with which the two opposite conclusions have both been advanced."

† Chapters l. li. Ewald's hypothetical date and authorship of these chapters is, of course, a reply to my argument so far.

But while I ask the reader to weigh these arguments against the conclusion that Isaiah could not have written these chapters, and that the text must be emended as corrupt, I would advise him not to be too impatient to have the question settled in the present stage of our knowledge and critical skill: nor when he has once acquainted himself with the doubts raised on the subject, to hope forthwith for 'the sweet sleep that he had yesterday.' He may, indeed, be sure that he will one day find that true wisdom and understanding, in this as in all things, will keep their promise, and be 'life to his soul,' so that his 'foot shall not stumble,' and his 'sleep shall be sweet: ' but the passage from child-like credence to manly insight is ever hard, and requires patience. I believe that he who, in his natural desire for certainty, overpersuades himself that the arguments of a Hengstenberg or other evangelical commentators are conclusive, will presently find a reaction in his mind, which will make him more at a loss than before. He must, after he has heard the debate on both sides, retire to quiet and long meditation on it before he can hope to get at any permanent result; and he may be content meanwhile, if he can honestly believe that the genuineness of the prophecy has not been disproved, though brought into doubt. Let him take Chaucer's advice: —

'Fly from the press, and dwell with sothfastness [truth]: —
The wresting of the world asketh a fall: —
But truth thee shall deliver, 'tis no drede.'

The Assyrian Inscriptions will ere long take their settled place among historical documents: and we are making daily progress in the scientific investigation of what Hebrew prophecy actually was, by the repeated examination of the subject in all directions, and by many workmen: and the answer to this question will finally become clear.

Let us now return to the text of this first of the series of 'Burdens,' — weighty and sustained denunciations against the various nations.

In the mountains to the north of Babylon is heard the hum of a great multitude, which proves to be the northern nations gathering to battle, mustered by the LORD of hosts Himself, and the weapons of His indignation, for laying waste the whole

land. In Babylon terror seizes every heart, every face is flushed or pallid with alarm and amazement: the day of the LORD's judgment is come upon the world-wide empire, like a tempest which shakes the heavens and earth, and, while it lasts, brings the established order of nature to chaos. In that populous and wealthy abode of luxurious and selfish civilisation, the life of a man, his own, or that of the soldier whom at any price he would employ, shall become more precious than gold, because gold can no longer buy it: the Medes care not for gold*, but for blood, though it be the blood of boys and infants: and if they want gold, they need not take it as ransom, for it is already theirs as plunder: for Babylon is defenceless, all her foreign auxiliaries are fled, or if any where they have made a stand against the enemy, they have been put to the sword. The desolation shall be complete. The LORD had once declared of his own vineyard that He would break down its wall, and lay it waste, and that strange sheep should feed there; but Babylon shall not be even a pasture-ground; the Arab wandering through Mesopotamia (as he has done ever since), and seeking pasture for his flocks and plunder for himself, shall not stay nor let them stay here, but shall leave the palaces and the pavilions to the owls and the wolves who make them resound with their cries.† It is said that at this very day the Bedouin, or wandering Arab, has a superstitious fear of passing a single night on the site of Babylon, and that the natives of the country believe it to be inhabited by demons in the form of goats. There seems, indeed, to have been an ancient belief among the Jews themselves that demons took the form of goats — appeared as satyrs in fact: and there is much to be said for either our Authorised Version, or for the more literary rendering of 'shaggy beasts,' or still more simply 'goats.'

Out of the destruction of Babylon shall come the deliverance of Israel: the whole captive people shall be called, as by a new election and choice of the LORD, and restored to their own

* "Ye Medes and others who now hear me, I well know that you have not accompanied me in this expedition with a view of acquiring wealth."—Speech of Cyrus to his Army, *Xenoph. Cyrop.* v.

†

"And in their palaces,

Where luxury late reign'd, sea-monsters whelp'd,
And stabled."

Paradise Lost, ix. 750.

land, from their hard bondage; and they shall bring their former masters back with them, to be in turn their servants. The prophet then puts into the mouth of the restored nation a song of which Lowth is generally thought not to speak with exaggeration, when he calls it the finest of its kind extant in any language; and as to which, those who profess to be able to distinguish the styles of different ages of Hebrew literature should explain, upon what known principles the strongly marked and gradual decline of literary power and taste between the times of Isaiah and Ezra could have exhibited such a revival as this ode shows. It is a song of triumph in the form of a dirge, and therefore involves an under-current of sarcasm or irony. The oppressor, and his golden city—so called for its wealth, or for its exaction of tribute—are fallen, and the whole earth, even to the very fir trees, is at rest, and breaks into singing:—

‘ All the earth is gay :
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity.’*

Hell—the unseen world of gloom to which the grave is the gate—is stirred to receive the new-comer: the shadowy and giant forms of once famous kings rise from their thrones below, to meet their brother, now become weak as they. Israel then resumes the speech (at verse 11.), and contrasts the ambition of him who would have ascended into heaven, and to the heights of the heavenly hill, with his actual fate, brought down to hell, and to the depths of its pit. The word which our version in both cases translates ‘ sides,’ may be better rendered ‘ uttermost heights ’ or ‘ depths,’ the Hebrew having the double force. The old explanation of ‘ the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north,’ was, that it referred to Mount Sion and the Temple, and that the cloud (the original is in the singular) was the white cloud of God’s presence; the impious boast being thus analogous to that in chapter x. 11., ‘ Shall I not, as I have done to Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her images?’ And I see no anti-climax in such a reading;

*

“ Ipsi lætitia voces ad sidera jactant
Intonsi montes; ipsæ jam carmina rupes,
Ipsa sonant arbusta.” Virg. *Ecl.* v. 62.

nor that there is any impropriety in the blending of the heathenish and the Jewish belief on the subject into one image. The modern interpretation, that the reference is to the assembly of the gods in some Meru-mountain, in the northern, and therefore highest, realms of an eastern mythology, is founded on the supposition that the local traditions which place Sion on the south of Jerusalem, must be preferred to those of the Talmud, which declare it to have been on the north:—as to which question, see below, on Isaiah xxii. One poetical image suggests, or thrusts out, another, in rapid succession. The king of Babylon shall *not* share what just now seemed the low condition of the other monarchs but now presents itself as a glorious repose, when contrasted with his lot—fallen by the sword, his body not embalmed, but the food of worms, refused a royal sepulchre, and fortunate if he can get so much burial as to be thrown into a pit with the common slain. The general meaning of verse 19. is plain, but the exact sense of the details is questioned. Perhaps the most probable explanation of the strong phrase ‘abominable branch’ is, that ‘branch’ is used here as elsewhere in a genealogical sense, and that the words are a vehement anticipation of the thought below, ‘the seed of evildoers shall not be named for ever;’ where the word ‘named’ or ‘renowned’ is the same as in the passage, ‘in Isaac shall thy name *be called*, and as in Ruth, iv. 14., which latter compare with its context. The LORD himself will take care to cut off the ‘name and the remnant,’ the direct heir and the collateral remainder-man, and the city, like its royal family, shall be exterminated. The appropriateness of the image of pools of water is evident, when we remember that Babylon lay in a low situation, where the land was only kept from the periodical inundations of the Euphrates by constant attention to the canals and ditches. If it were deserted by its inhabitants, it would inevitably become ‘pools of water’ in a short time:—as is now the case. The expression, ‘besom of destruction,’ finds a counterpart in the annals of Sargon, where he calls himself ‘the sweeper away of Samaria, and of the whole of Beth-Omri.’

But the invasion of Judæa, not the subsequent deportation of its inhabitants (like that which had already begun in the northern tribes of the kingdom of Samaria), might seem the

more pressing danger to Isaiah's own countrymen at the time he wrote; therefore he winds up this far-seeing denunciation of the ultimate fates of Babylon and Israel, with a declaration of the LORD's purpose, — confirmed with an oath, and not to be disannulled,—to break the power of the Assyrians when they had entered His land, on the confines of which they were now hovering, and to free His people from the yoke of tribute and oppression, which they were already feeling the weight of.

CHAPTER X.

ISAIAH XIV. 28.: PHILISTIA.—ORIGIN OF THE PHILISTINES—THEIR EXTERMINATION COMMANDED BY MOSES.—LAW OF CONQUESTS AND EXTERMINATIONS.—BRITISH CONQUEST OF INDIA.—EVIL NOT ETERNAL.—PHILISTIA'S RELATIONS WITH JUDAH—WITH ASSYRIA.—SARGON AND SENNACHERIB IN PHILISTIA.

‘IN the year that king Ahaz died was this burden:’—namely, on Philistia. There is a turn of expression in this title, which is noticeable, both as being such as an author himself would be likely to give, when arranging and editing his writings in a collected form; and also such as a patriot would use to vent his feeling at the thought of the relief from national shame and suffering which the change from an Ahaz to a Hezekiah had effected. Like the opening of chapter vi., it is better referred to the time before, than after, the king's death, as the context shows.

Philistia was the south-west coast of the land of Canaan, to the whole of which it afterwards gave its name in the Greek form of Palestine, and was nominally included in the tribe of Judah. It was originally inhabited by the Avites, who were expelled by the Capthorim, a race of Egyptian origin, but supposed to have come immediately from Crete or Cyprus, and who, under the name of Philistines, continued as a distinct, and for the most part independent, nation, in spite of the efforts of Israel to subdue them. These Capthorim are also called Cherethim, which latter would be the Hebrew mode of writing *Cretans*, and which is twice translated Κρητες by the LXX.; whence it has been inferred that there is ground for a tradition which says that the Cretans took possession of this coast under Minos, who built Gaza, and called it Minoa. Capthor will then be Crete. We may infer from Amos, ix. 7. and Deut. ii. 23. (in which latter verse translate Hazerim ‘villages,’ instead of leaving it a proper name), that this immigration of the

Capthorim must have taken place within the historical memory of the Jews, though at such a period that Abraham found them already settled, as Philistines. The supposition of Vitranga that the the 'Cherethites and Pelethites,' were Cretan and Philistine bowmen, the body-guards of David, has been adopted by two of the most recent authorities on this subject : and it derives increased probability from David's long sojourn in Philistia, and the attachment which Ittai the Gittite (of Gath) showed to his fortunes.*

The Philistines were among the nations whom Moses commanded the children of Israel to exterminate. This command can be better appreciated with our now reviving belief that there is a morality and a criminal justice for nations as well as for individuals; but it would perhaps never have been so commonly impugned as it has been, but for the no less common and far less moral defence, that the act commanded would have been mere wickedness in any other people, but that being commanded by God it was thus made lawful for the Jews. But as to the command itself, apart from such defences of it, I say that it was both righteous and merciful, and that it is not an exception to the universal law by which men are to govern themselves, but the announcement—the revelation—once for all of the law which always has been, and always will be, applicable to all like cases,—whether a return of the Heracleids, a Spanish conquest of Mexico, a Saxon or a Norman invasion of England, or a Sir James Brooke's destruction of Borneo pirates. If the spread of civilisation, knowledge, justice, virtue, religion, and whatever else distinguishes men from beasts, is a good and not an evil, then it is good for men to use all the means which are really necessary to effect that end, even though some of them be never so rough and unpleasing; and it is not less base in public than in private morals, to shrink from the responsibility of ourselves doing that which we know it is good to have done. If a weak, effeminate, degenerate nation can be improved by subjection to a stronger, manlier, more virtuous

* 2 Sam. viii. 18., xv. 18–22., xx.7.; 1 Kings, i. 38. 44. The last edition of Winer's *Realwörterbuch* contains much valuable matter under the several names above.

nation, then it is not only the right, but the duty, of the latter to bring it into subjection, whenever the indications of God's providence, be they of peace or war, show that the time has come. And if the nation is not merely degenerate, but hopelessly corrupt, then it is not only the right, but the duty, of some worthier nation to destroy it, and rid the world of its abominations. The Gospel has given to us, in modern Christendom, means of reclaiming nations who would have been irreclaimable by any measures which Greeks or Romans, or even Jews, could apply ; and we are bound to act with corresponding gentleness and forbearance. But if we look at the actual condition and relations of the Israelites and the nations of Canaan in the time of Moses, we see that the Canaanites had reached the last stage of degeneracy when they made their very religion to consist in the practice of their characteristic crimes of unnatural cruelty or lust, and that wherever they were tolerated instead of exterminated by the Israelites, the purer morals as well as faith of the Israelites soon fell under the pestilent contagion, and they not only followed their gods, but 'did after their abominations : ' so that the event proved what Moses foresaw, that if the future nation of Israel was to fill that place in the world and the world's history which its 'its right noble stock,' its *stirps generosa et historica*, already indicated it to be intended to fill, room must be made for it not merely in territory but in moral atmosphere, by a national execution such as we Christians still inflict on individual criminals of like magnitude. If Moses had counted the slow moral death of Israel a less evil than the physical extinction of races who had already destroyed their own human being, what would have been the condition of the world now, and what the state of the world-wide contest between good and evil? If we examine the whole case in that impartial and thoughtful temper which alone becomes the student of history, we must, I think, come to the conclusion that these injunctions of Moses are really righteous ; and worthy — if the creation of man at all was worthy — of the God of righteousness : and that their provisions for confining the destruction of life within the narrowest limits possible *, are in

* Deut. xx. 10—18.

accordance with the recognised rules of warfare in the humanest ancient nations, and with much of the practice of even those of Christian Europe. In a word, I believe that if we can read them in the light of universal history, and history in their light, we shall see them to be what they claim to be,—a part of the revelation of God.

Here, as always, the Bible reveals to us the universal law of political society, in the special instance of the Hebrew nation. The claim of Abraham's descendants to the land of Canaan, because God had given it to him, is a claim essentially of the same kind as that of the Dorians to Sparta, or of the Normans to England. There was no more technical force in the first than in the others: they no less than it were divinely inspired and sanctioned: but the Hebrew grant and conquest, taken in connection with the whole previous and subsequent history of which they are a part, reveal God as the righteous Author and Upholder of political society, anticipating, preparing, and directing all the successive arrangements by which the end is to be effected; and thus they throw a direct light (for him who cares to have it) on all other national conquests and settlements, which these only reflect back on it. The Jews were, no doubt, as bloody and rapacious in their manner of effecting their settlement in Palestine, as many other nations in like circumstances; but this does but make it clearer, that we have to distinguish between the thing that had to be done because it was right and good to do it, and the imperfect human instruments who did it in a very imperfect manner. As soon as we once get this distinction between the eternal, wise, and good *law* of national settlements, and the partial and defective realisations of it in time by men, we recover the old faith in the Bible as the revelation of God's mind; and yet are freer than the freest sceptic from the strange, yet common, perversion of reverence into superstition which has made men, in the last and present generation, fall back on that (in truth, though not in intention) immoral and blasphemous defence of the Hebrew conquest, which pleads that it 'is but a wrong in God's own world, and He may quickly make it right.' This doctrine has made many a man reject the Bible, when he has too hastily supposed that it did to contain what he had been taught from childhood to be there, but what his own conscience told him was contrary to

the immutable distinction of right and wrong. And it has developed that unhealthy and dishonest way of looking at history and politics by religious men, that atheistic separation between worldly and religious grounds of political action (as though the former, no less than the latter, were good in its place) which we are all familiar with. Thus, every real student of the history of the establishment of the British power in India knows, that our merchants there were originally actuated by no ambitious designs, but by singularly limited desires for mere peaceful traffic; and that they allowed the conquests of Clive in Bengal, as well as the earlier wars at Madras, with the greatest reluctance, and purely in order to defend themselves in the midst of the general anarchy into which the Mogul empire was dissolved: and yet religious writers of no small knowledge of history, have actually preferred to ignore the real current of events, and to assert that our possession of India cannot be justified on Christian grounds, and is no place for a Christian governor, like Sir John Shore; but that we have of course a right, on worldly grounds, to hold and govern what a worldly disregard of the principles of the Bible alone enabled us to get. Let us take the facts of the conquest as they really occurred; and let us say, that though the English traders had as little belief that God was calling on them to 'go up and possess the land,' as they had ambitious inclination to do so; yet that because it was God's will to re-organise India under Christian laws and institutions, after those of Menu and of the Koran had done their work, He, by His providence, made the first steps of the conquest unavoidable, and so led us on to the subsequent position, in which an ambitious Hastings or Wellesley, no less than a justice-loving Cornwallis, or a pious and philanthropic Shore, were made to do their successive tasks:—and then we shall falsify neither the Bible nor history.

The barren question of the origin of evil may, of course, be raised here as anywhere else, and with as little result. Yet the workings of evil in political society, and this harsh remedy of the extinction of races, do present difficulties for which every reasonable man desires a solution, and of which the one sufficient solution is, that the end is not in this world; that men are but at school on earth; and that our earthly existence will one day

prove to bear some such relation to our higher life, — as trivial and transient in its details, though as important in its results — as the mature man now sees his school-boy life to have been. And, therefore, it may not be out of place to notice here a still more important instance of that habit of conceiving God in our own image, which I have already spoken of, and to which all these notions of a right to do wrong pertain. It was but another reflex of the narrow, fine-gentleman, slave-trading, eighteenth-century, spirit which exhibited, in the light of its logical systems, the doctrine that God's punishments are eternal, that is, ends and not means; and which could believe, with complacency, that God had made hell a permanent and important part of heaven, and consigned a large portion of the human race to it, with the same kind of justice as our legislature and judges executed day by day without misgiving — as an end and not as a means — upon classes, criminal for the most part through an ignorance and misery for which their rulers were responsible. Such notions — very different when deliberately systematised, to what they are as held by a Luther, who exclaims, 'Nature says it is unjust, Grace says it is unjust, but Glory will prove it just,' and there leaves it in reverent humility — still hang about us, and we are afraid of rooting them up, lest we root up wheat with the tares. But they are ready to vanish. The growing faith that reformation, not destruction, is the end in man's dealings with the rebel against human law, is but the refracted light which tells that a clearer, brighter, more Christian apprehension of God's character is about to dawn upon us. And instead of our continuing to fancy that we are bound to read the New Testament, by the dimmer light of the Old, and to limit the divine inspiration of the Apostle of the Gentiles, in his amplest utterances, by the letter of a few of his sentences, interpreted (or rather misinterpreted) so literally as to be no more logical than moral, we shall find ourselves made free by the truth as it is in Christ; and then the Church will no longer pass by, but will give the importance and the meaning which St. Paul himself gives, to that 'revelation of the mystery of the grace of God in Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men,' and which Christians have so strangely refused for the most part to receive, since it has been revealed to them. Then we shall un-

derstand that 'the *whole* family in heaven and earth' is named of God and of Christ; that the very meaning of the Gospel, the good news itself, is that, where sin has abounded grace shall *much more* abound, and reign (not unto death, but) unto eternal life. 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in his own order. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL.'

The author of the Book of Judges, with the political insight of this nation of prophets, points out how the inability of the Israelites to drive out the Philistines (among other nations) was the consequence of their losing their faith in their LORD and King, and with it their military as well as moral superiority; and how this evil was yet, by God's providence, made to promote its own cure, the oppressions of the heathens stimulating them both 'to learn war,' and to return from their idolatrous associations to the true faith.* The Philistines were very formidable enemies to Israel in the days of Samuel and of Saul. The strong kings, David, Solomon, and Jehoshaphat, kept them in subjection, but in the days of Jehoram they invaded Judah.† Uzziah again repressed them, and crippled their power, dismantling their walled cities, and building fortresses of his own to command them‡; and no doubt they continued tributary during the still vigorous government of his successor Jotham. But during the weak reign of Ahaz, they 'invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah;' and not only invaded, but settled themselves in them, and their neighbouring villages§: and to this state of things Isaiah addresses himself in this prophecy. And here as elsewhere we may notice the appropriateness of his language, indicating accurate knowledge and lively imagination: the words 'gate' and 'city,' and the threat that 'famine' shall be the chief, and the sword only the subordinate, instrument of their destruction, point to the strongholds which characterised the Philistian power; and the 'feeding' and 'lying down' of the defenceless Israelite alludes to the 'low country' which lay so open to its inroads. The rod

* Judges, ii. 20. to iii. 4., which may be called the text to the whole book.

† 2 Sam. v. 17—25., xxi. 15.; 2 Chron. xvii. 11., xxi. 16, 17.

‡ 2 Chron. xxvi. 6, 7.

§ 2 Chron. xxviii. 18.

of the taskmaster is Isaiah's frequent image for the control of a dependent and tributary nation: all Philistia had rejoiced when the rod of David and of Uzziah fell broken from the hands of Ahaz, and expressed their joy by wasting or taking possession of their former master's lands; but Isaiah warns them that the old root of Israel, which, from the days of Samson, had sent forth many a rod with a serpent's life, like the rod of Moses, would soon again produce a basilisk with its royal crest, its inevitable spring, and its mortal bite, to take vengeance on his enemies. The 'first-born of the poor' seems to be a Hebrew idiom for the 'really, eminently, poor,' like that of 'Son of Man' to express *the* man. So Job uses the 'first-born of death' (xviii. 13.) for death itself, or a violent death; and the 'sons of thunder' are persons of a thundering disposition — a striking phraseology, apparently springing from the strong family feeling of the Hebrew. The Philistines had latterly so overrun and plundered the country, that there was neither food for the poor peasant and his family, nor safety for any who were too weak to protect themselves: but things shall soon be reversed; those roots of Philistia, the five cities with their five lords, shall be reduced by famine though their walls hold out, and then the sword shall smite those who would escape.

Thus far the prophet would seem to be predicting the recovery by Judah of its supremacy, in the expected event of the death of Ahaz, pointed to by the title: but then (ver. 31.), either as though he doubted whether Judah itself would effect the conquest, or more probably with an abrupt turn to the thought of the Assyrian power which he could see was preparing to sweep over all the southern nations, and Philistia among them, with a violence far greater than any a Judæan army could exert, he proceeds to say that they shall not only return to that subordination which Judah enforced when it could; but that their whole polity should be dissolved: — for why? 'For there cometh from the north a smoke;' and when that smoke*, that

* "Ac simul Æneas *fumantes* pulvere campos

Prospexit longe, Laurentiaque *agmina* vidit."—Virg. *Æn.* xi. 908.

"First was seen dust, like a white cloud," as the army of the Great King came on against the younger Cyrus. — Grote's *Greece*, ix. 58.

When the peril from Attila and his Huns was imminent, Amianus bishop

too intelligible cloud of dust, draws nearer, it will reveal that army of which the fame is already striking terror into all the nations of the earth, the army which ‘has no straggler in its levies,’* and at the approach of which the strongest city may despair, and the councillors who sit in its gate change their wisest plans into lamentations. Then the Philistines will send ambassadors to propose to Judah some scheme of alliance and combined defence against the common foe; but the LORD’s chosen people will reply — as it was the one, unvarying principle of Isaiah’s policy that they ought to reply to all such propositions — that they will make no such alliance with heathens, but will put their trust in the LORD; and when the flood of invasion spreads over the land, the defenceless inhabitants of the open country will take refuge in Zion, and there look to the LORD to keep his own city. ‘We tell our LORD God,’ said Luther, ‘that if He will have His Church, He must keep it Himself, for we cannot do it; and it is well for us that we cannot, else we should be the proudest asses under heaven.’

Putting the few facts in the Hebrew records with the ampler statements in the Assyrian annals, the subsequent history of Philistia, and in which this prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, stands thus: — Hezekiah made the Philistines once more tributary to Judah†, and not improbably entered into some arrangements with the Egyptians for opposing the southward progress of the Assyrians, by means of garrisons in the strong fortresses of Philistia. Sargon, on the other hand, after the conquest of Damascus and Samaria, advanced to the west and south, and we presently find his general, Tartan, laying siege to Ashdod‡, the ruler of which flies to Egypt, and the fortress falls, as do

of Orleans sent “a messenger to observe from the ramparts the face of the distant country. . . In his third report he mentioned a small cloud . . . at the extremity of the horizon. . . . It is the aid of God, exclaimed the bishop, . . . and the whole multitude repeated after him, It is the aid of God. The remote object became each moment larger . . . the Roman and Gothic banners were gradually perceived; and a favourable wind blowing aside the dust, discovered in deep array, the impatient squadrons of Ætius and Theodoric, who pressed forward to the relief of Orleans.” — Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxxv.

* Compare the description in chapter v. ver. 26—30.

† 2 Kings, xviii. 8.

‡ Isaiah, xx. 1

those of Gaza and Askelon, where also Sargon found Egyptian commandants.* Sennacherib, on coming to the throne, found that the Philistian lords, like Hezekiah, were refusing to pay the tribute imposed on them by his predecessors: so, after visiting Tyre and Sidon with the like purpose, he proceeded to Philistia, and of what he did there he gives the following account: — “Sitka of Ascalon, who did not come to pay me homage, the gods of his house, and his treasures, his sons and his daughters, and his brothers of the house of his father, I seized and sent off to Nineveh. I placed another chief [name illegible] on the throne of Ascalon, and I imposed on him the regulated amount of tribute. In the autumn of the year certain other cities, which had refused to submit to my authority, I took and plundered. The nobles and the people of Ekron having expelled their king, Haddiya, and the Assyrian troops who garrisoned the town, attached themselves to Hezekiah of Judæa, and paid their adoration to his god [the name is lost]. The kings of Egypt also sent horsemen and footmen, belonging to the army of the king of Miruhka [Meroë, or Æthiopia], of which the numbers could not be counted. In the neighbourhood of the city of Allakhis [Lachish] I joined battle with them. The captains of the cohorts, and the young men of the kings of Egypt, and the captains of the cohorts of the king of ‘Meroë,’ I put to the sword in the country of Lubana [Libnah]. Afterwards I moved to the city of Ekron, and the chiefs of the people having humbled themselves, I admitted them into my service; but the young men I carried into captivity, to inhabit the cities of Assyria. Their goods and wealth I also plundered to an untold amount. Their king, Haddiya, I then brought back from the city of Jerusalem, and again placed in authority over them, imposing on him the regulated tribute of the empire; and because Hezekiah, king of Judæa, did not submit to my yoke, forty-six of his strong fenced cities, and innumerable smaller towns which depended on them, I took and plundered; but I left to him Jerusalem, his capital city, and some of the inferior towns around it. The cities which I had taken and plundered I detained from the government of Hezekiah, and distributed between the kings of Ashdod, and Ascalon, and

* Rawlinson's *Commentary*, pp. 62, 63. 66.

Ekron, and Gazah; and having thus enlarged the territory of these chiefs, I imposed on them a corresponding increase of tribute over that to which they had formerly been subjected.”*

The learned translators of these annals admit many of these details to be still doubtful: but the general purport of their two versions is the same; and if it be in the main correct, we see that the Egyptian alliance which Isaiah more specifically denounces hereafter, was a part of a great political system of combined defence against Assyria; and then the similarity of the prophet's ‘burdens’ of Tyre and Moab to this of Philistia, suggests the probability that they too were members of the system, and throws a new light on Isaiah's purpose in making them the subjects of his discourse. We shall have to return to this alliance: here we may observe, that on this, as on so many other occasions, Isaiah foretells what ought to have been, and would have been, if it had not been prevented by want of faith in the Jewish government and people: he gives the answer which Hezekiah ought to have returned to the proposals of the Philistines: Sennacherib's annals tell us what answer the Jewish king did return, and how he was punished for it. Yet, in the end, God's plan and purpose, and His prophet's declaration of it, were fulfilled: after they had tried to save themselves by their own policy, they did in the end, and in their extremity, turn to their LORD to save them. Such is the usual history, not of the Jews only, but of Christian nations and Christian individuals now. We have premonitions of God's plan; we try and substitute a self-willed caricature of it; and when that fails, we turn and accept His Will.

* Rawlinson's *Outline*, p. 23. Compare Dr. Hincks's version in Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 143.

CHAPTER XI.

ISAIAH XV., XVI.: MOAB — PROBABLY REDUCED BY SHALMANESER. — HISTORY OF MOAB — PICTURE OF ITS OVERTHROW. — TRIBUTE OF LAMBS DUE TO JUDAH. — FRIENDSHIP WITH JUDAH ADVISED. — MODERN DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ANIMAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE. — CORPORATE UNITY OF A STATE.

THE ‘Burden of Moab.’ — The place and the contents of this prophecy agree to indicate that it was delivered about the same time with the preceding; that is, in the last year of Ahaz, or the first of Hezekiah. The only historical reference to its fulfilment, which it threatens shall certainly be within three years from its delivery, is what we may consider to lie in Sennacherib’s mention of *Budastor*, king of *Beth-Ammon*, as one of the kings who ‘repaired to his presence in the neighbourhood of the city of Tyre, with their accustomed tribute,’ in the third year of his annals.* But Moab can hardly have escaped the lot of all the neighbouring nations at this period of Assyrian conquest: and at no time was it more likely to be invaded than when Shalmaneser came up to besiege Samaria, in the third year of Hezekiah. The adoption of this prophecy by Jeremiah, shows that Moab, like other nations threatened by Isaiah, was again a flourishing people, and destined to suffer a renewed and severer fulfilment of the judgment originally pronounced.

The Moabites, a collateral tribe of the Hebrew race, had (before the departure of the latter from Egypt) established themselves in a territory from which they had driven out the Emims, and which extended from Zoar at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, to the river Jabbok on the north, and was bounded on the west by that sea and the Jordan, and on the

* Rawlinson’s *Outline*, p. 22.

east by the desert. But not many years before the children of Israel took possession of the land of Canaan, Sihon king of the Amorites, who then dwelt in Canaan, passed the Jordan, conquered all that part of Moab which lies between the rivers Jabbok and Arnon, left the Moabites only the tract south of the latter river, and made Heshbon his capital.

Moses had commanded the Israelites to respect the territory and the rights of Moab, as he had those of Edom and Ammon, and he would have passed peaceably through the kingdom of Sihon, but the latter refused to permit him, and gave him battle; and, on his defeat, Moses took possession of his newly acquired territory, and divided it between Reuben and Gad. Balak, king of Moab, took alarm, though unmolested; but after an alliance with the Midianites, and taking the prophet Balaam to their counsels, they thought it more politic to conciliate than to attack the strangers. And from this time the relations of the two peoples were sometimes hostile, sometimes friendly. In the days of the Judges, Eglon, king of Moab, made Israel tributary for eighteen years, but he was killed by Ehud, and the yoke broken. A time of peace then appears to have succeeded, in which we see, from the story of Ruth, that not merely friendly intercourse, but even intermarriage took place. Saul made war on the Moabites, and David reduced them to be tributaries. After the separation of the Ten Tribes from Judah, Moab continued a province of the former kingdom, and the tribute paid to Ahab was 'a hundred thousand lambs, and a hundred thousand rams, with the wool,' for 'Moab was a sheep-master.' At the death of Ahab the Moabites rebelled against his son Joram, who, with the aid of Judah and Edom, defeated the rebels in a great battle, and laid waste their land; but it has been inferred that they were not effectually conquered, and were shortly able to make war on Jehoshaphat in revenge for his late alliance against them. About fifty years after, we find marauding 'bands of the Moabites' entering the territory of Ephraim, as though they were either independent or in revolt. And after a further silence of history for more than a century, we here find Moab not only a flourishing and independent kingdom, but in unquestioned possession of the ancient lands and cities of Reuben and Gad. Moab had, as Jeremiah com-

plains of Ammon, become 'the heir of Israel*,' and the absence of even so much of protest from this prophecy of Isaiah, seems to indicate that the possession was, partly at least, held by old prescriptive right. Some of the cities, though granted by Moses to Reuben and Gad, may have continued in the hands of their former possessors, as those of Philistia did; and the Moabite power and territory would probably extend itself as the strength and population of the kingdom of Ephraim decayed, till the Assyrian deportations of the latter, of which more than one had already occurred, ended any remaining disputes.

The god of Moab is called Chemosh and Baal-Peor: the latter name is explained to mean Baal of Mount Peor, the mount to which Balak took Balaam to curse Israel, and which was, perhaps, the chief place of their worship. The national character and national worship were, no doubt, as intimately related as they are found to be in all nations which have left sufficient means of information on the subject. Whether such means exist in the present case must be decided by a profounder insight than I possess.

The vision of the overthrow of Moab rises before the prophet. Ar-Moab, or Rabbath-Moab, — 'Moab's City,' — of which the ruins, under the name of Mab, or Erabba, may still be seen on the south of the Arnon, is cut off by an attack unexpected as the thief in the night: so is Kir — 'Moab's Wall,' or 'fortress,' — which, a castle on a rocky hill, a few miles south-east of Ar, still tells the traveller of its importance, by the remains of its church and mosque, and by the name of Karrak-Moba, which it gives to its no longer resident bishop, and to the whole tract which was once Moab. He sees the people with heads and beards shaven in token of grief, girt with sackcloth, dissolved in tears, and uttering loud lamentations; going up to the high places of their gods at Bajith and at Dibon, to entreat for aid; wandering through the streets; collecting in the market-places, or open squares near the gate, where the last news of the enemy, or of the plans of the government, might be heard; or retiring to their house-tops to supplicate their household

* Jer. xlix. 1.

gods, or mourn in private over the fate of their families and themselves.* Heshbon, the royal city of the Amorites; bestowed on Reuben and on Gad and his Levites at different times; famous for its fish-pools; and, like the neighbouring Elealeh, still to be found by name in the highlands of Gilead opposite Jericho; makes its cry of despair—a cry which even the warriors of Moab raise instead of their battle-shout—heard afar, for men's very life is a burden to them. The prophet may have little love for Moab, but his heart cannot but be touched by such utter woe; for he sees the whole people flying from their houses, towards Zoar, on their southern frontier, as their father Lot had once fled to the same city, in his extremity. They fly as the heifer in her prime, and when her voice is deepest, flies from the first attempt to bring her under the yoke: he sees them weeping as they go up the hill of Luhith, on their way to Zoar, and he hears their broken cries as they descend again by the road of Horonaim. Then half-retaining, half-changing the image of the heifer, the prophet explains the cause of their flight to be, that the waters, and consequently the green fields, of Nimrim, or Nimra, near Heshbon, which, because it had the rare blessing of water, was a fertile valley, and a coveted pasture for cattle†, 'are desolations'—struck by drought, whether conceived as a poetical image, or as the actual result of the cutting of water-courses in war. The invader is upon them, and their only remaining chance is to cross the

* Vitranga quotes Justin's description of Athens (lib. v. c. 7.), when news had arrived of the loss of Conon and his army: "Quæ cuncta cum Athenis nunciata essent, omnes relictis domibus per urbem discurrere pavidī; aliū alium seiscitari; auctorem nunciū requirere; non pueros imprudentia; non senes debilitas; non mulieres sexūs imbecillitas domi tenet: adeo ad omnem ætatem tantī mali sensus penetraverat. In foro deinde cœunt, atque ibi perpeti nocte fortunam publicam questibus iterant. Alii fratres, filios, aut patres, DEFLENT," &c. &c. And of Carthage (lib. xix. c. 2.), after the destruction of Imilco's army in Sicily: "Quæ res cum nunciata Carthagini esset, mœsta civitas fuit; omnia ULULATIBUS, non secus ac si urbs ipsa capta esset, PERSONABANT Cuncti deinde AD PORTUM congregantur," &c. Compare, too, the descriptions of Syracuse expecting the Carthaginians; and of the population of Himera, Agrigentum, and Gela, flying from them.—Grote's *History of Greece*, x. 599.

† Numbers, xxxii. 3. 36.; Josh. xiii. 27.

‘ Brook of Willows ’ (now called Wady-el-Ahsa, and forming now, as then, the boundary of the land), carrying with them what they can of the wealth which long peace had enabled them to accumulate. The cry and the howling spread even beyond the frontiers of Moab, and shall be heard at the ‘ Well of Princes,’ where Israel once found water in the desert, and in their joy sang that song, ‘ Spring, O Well,’ destined to endure with their own name for ever. The channel of Dimon shall run blood instead of water: and if any escape the sword, upon them the Lord will bring lions: — a threat which may be understood literally, as we have accounts of the actual appearance of these beasts on the west bank of the Jordan, the thickets of which they seem to have frequented. As long as national order and prosperity continued, the wild beasts would be kept under, and driven back to their woods and mountains; but in times of anarchy, when the population was diminished, the fields not fenced in, the cattle not watched, and the roads not kept in constant use by traffic, they would prowl in quest of prey through the land.

The expression of ‘ sending the lamb ’ is clearly explained by the account already referred to, of the mode in which the tribute of Moab was paid during its dependence on Israel. A more difficult question arises from the mention of Sela — ‘ the Rock ’ — which it seems most straightforward to take here, as in 2 Kings, xiv. 7., to be Petra, the chief city of Edom: and we must then suppose that it had fallen into the power of Moab, perhaps at the time when this nation made itself obnoxious to the denunciation of Amos, Isaiah’s elder contemporary, for some savage outrage on Edom*; or that Sela is here mentioned, not as in possession of Moab, but to indicate that the required flocks would be collected most conveniently in the pasture grounds near that city, whether they already belonged to the Moabites, or were to be purchased from Edom. The ‘ wildernesses ’ and ‘ deserts ’ of the Bible answer (with due allowance for the difference of climate and consequent vegetation) to what we call moors or commons, uninhabited, but fit for pasture. The wilderness here referred to was probably the tract

* Amos, ii. 1.

between Petra and Judæa, which Strabo calls *ἔρημος*, and Jerome *desertum*; and Sela may have been the head-station of the shepherds who frequented these plains with their vast flocks, and where they found such protection and water as Uzziah is said to have provided for his flocks by making 'towers and wells in the desert.'

Isaiah, after declaring the woes that are coming on the people of Moab, calls them to submit themselves again to their rightful lord-paramount, by sending the tribute as in former times. The image of the Daughter of Zion sitting in royal dignity suggests that of the daughters of Moab in flight; and this the two images of the undignified peasant or female slave wading through a river, and that of young birds losing their nest and struggling at the risk of their lives.* And then the abrupt turn of expression seems to indicate that he is suddenly conscious of the apparent impropriety of a Jew in the unhappy reign of Ahaz, when his own country was in the depths of humiliation and distress, thus addressing the haughty Moab, which was still in all its prosperity and pride, and at the very moment a place of refuge for the Israelites, who were flying from their own land to avoid military inroads on every side, and also the extortion of tribute, which, from the way in which Isaiah constantly speaks of it, would seem to have been collected by the Assyrians themselves: and therefore, while repeating the prediction which he had lately made to the Philistines, that the throne of David would shortly be established in its former power, and giving this as the reason why Moab had better return to his allegiance, he makes it also a reason why meanwhile the Hebrew fugitives should be treated with less pride and wrath.

The old way of understanding this as the address of Isaiah to Moab, seems to me to give a more coherent sense than the modern supposition, that it is the petition of Moab which accompanies the lambs.

But, the prophet adds, such arguments will be in vain; we know his proud and cruel character too well. This insolence is spoken of as the national character of Moab and Ammon by Jeremiah (xlviii. 27—30.) and Zephaniah (ii. 8—

* Compare chap. xlvii. 1—9.

10.), and we find Sanballat of Horonaim (in Moab), and Tobiah the Ammonite, mocking, in the old spirit of their people, the builders of Jerusalem under Nehemiah. But his pride shall not prevail; his boasting will prove a lie in the end. The land of Moab was famous then, as it is still, for its pastures and its vineyards; and in renewing his warning of the destruction at hand, Isaiah now takes his images from the latter, as before from the former, feature of the country. He sees 'Heshbon and Elealeh, and the flowery dale of Sibmah clad with vines,' wasted by the ruthless invaders, who break down those plants so famous for their choice fruit, and so luxuriant in their growth, that nature and man combined to carry them beyond the limits of the desert and over the sea. This 'sea' may either be the Dead Sea, or, as Jeremiah understands it, a lake at Jazer, though none has been found there now. The prophet's sympathy is so excited that he weeps for Sibmah, as Jazer and its people themselves may weep; and if their watercourses are cut off, he will supply the loss with his tears. The wheat and barley were the spring-harvest; but the joy of the summer-harvest, when the fruits, the olives and the grapes, were gathered in to repay the toils of the year, would be the greater: but the singing and the shouting in the vineyard and at the wine-press are not now heard; their vintage-shout has ceased, for other gatherers and treaders are come, and the battle-shout is heard in its stead.

Kir-hareseth and Kir-haresh are understood to be other names for Kir-Moab, mentioned above. Sibmah was in the neighbourhood of Heshbon. The expression 'my bowels shall sound like a harp for Moab,' employs a favourite image of the Hebrew poets. The ancients would not have understood the feeling which makes such allusions repulsive to modern taste, while we acknowledge their appropriateness and force. We shrink from such undisguised mention, in words, of the more grossly animal functions, just as we do from the unrestrained utterance of such 'howlings' as are attributed to Moab in the chapters before us, and which would not have seemed degrading to a Greek or Roman any more than to a Hebrew. And the best explanation is that which has been given of the latter fact by the author of 'Guesses at Truth;' namely, that

Christianity has so clearly established the distinction between flesh and spirit, that every man, woman, and child can feel it to be disgraceful that our animal nature should, even under the most trying circumstances, have its own way, and cease to be under the authority of our human will. Self-possession and self-control are no longer virtues to be exhibited only by great men on great occasions, but to be the ordinary habit of all of us at all times.

When Moab finds that he is wearying himself to no purpose by his sacrifices on the high places, he shall try whether prayers in his temples will be more effectual; but both shall be in vain. These judgments have been hanging over the head of Moab from of old: but now the time of their accomplishment is near; it shall be within three years, to be understood literally and precisely as they would be in the hiring a servant for such a term. There is no occasion, though no objection (except what lies against all unnecessary conjectures), to suppose that verses 13. and 14. are a postscript added to the prophecy, itself of earlier date: it is just as easy to understand them as parts of one whole.

We may notice here, though the observation applies equally to all like occasions, that Moab is a Person in the eyes of the prophet; for this much better expresses the case than to speak of a personification. This sense of the corporate unity of a nation was much stronger among the ancients, as it was in the middle ages, than anything we feel now in our political communities, which are so much larger, and with such much more complicated interests than those of former times. Our old legal forms, by which an association of men is 'incorporated,' with perpetual succession, power to sue and be sued, and to use a common seal, as though a single person; as well as those which erect individual personages, such as the sovereign, the bishop, the parson, and so on, into 'corporations sole,' with the legal powers of a corporate body; are illustrations of the mediæval feeling. If we have lost something, we have also gained something by the change; for it has been effected in a great degree by a healthy growth and expansion of patriotism towards philanthropy, if it must also in some respects be referred to a depression of the patriotic by the selfish temper.

The Romish, and I must add the Anglican, Churches are warnings of the evil of endeavouring to restrict the catholic spirit within the limits of a formal and finite personality of this kind, in opposition to the indications of God's providence, no less than His express declarations, that the highest unity is that of the spirit and not of the letter.*

It seems to me unnecessary to notice the reasons which are advanced for attributing this prophecy to some other writer than Isaiah.

Jeremiah has recast its component parts in a new form; as he has the prophecies against Babylon; and in each case with the same indications that he is not the original author.

* M. Bunsen gives a very clear statement of the philosophic grounds—of the essentially real and rational basis—of the personality of societies as well as individuals; and of its adequate realisation in the Christian Church, as the finite manifestation of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity.—*Hippolytus and his Age*, ii. 32—52. I strongly commend the passage to all students.

CHAPTER XII.

ISAIAH, XVII., XVIII.: DAMASCUS, EPHRAIM, AND ETHIOPIA.—PROBABLE DATE AND UNITY OF THIS PROPHECY. — THE RUSH OF NATIONS. — THE GENERAL PANIC. — WORLDLY ALLIANCES. — GOD'S DELIVERANCE. — NOTION OF THIS PROPHECY BEING A MYTH — NOT WELL FOUNDED.

THE old division between chapters xvii. and xviii. (as in the Authorised Version) indicates the old opinion, that a distinct prophecy begins with the latter chapter, though it might be a question whether verses 12, 13, and 14. of the former one were a fragment detached from both, or the conclusion of that entitled 'The Burden of Damascus,' but which relates still more to Ephraim, the ally of Damascus at the beginning of the reign of Ahaz. The modern opinion is in favour of considering that the former prophecy ends with verse 11. of chapter xvii. ; and that its date is the same as that of chapter viii.—ix. 7., namely, the year in which the northern tribes of Israel were carried away by Assyria, and which deportation is supposed to have taken place the year before that of the inhabitants of Damascus. And the remaining verses of chapter xvii. are taken as the beginning of a new prophecy, ending with the end of chapter xviii., from which they should never have been divided; while its date is referred to the same period as that of chapter xx., when the Assyrians were actually beginning to overflow the borders of Judah, and the ministers and people of Hezekiah were looking to Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia and Egypt, for help.

Yet there is some force in the argument that in this part of the book, where a series of titles seems to define the beginning and end of each portion, we should take the two chapters as one whole; that the under-current of thought common to verses 11. and 14. of chapter xvii., with verse 5. of chapter xviii., is in favour of the continuity of the text; and that there is also a unity of idea pervading this whole, and corresponding with that

which we have noticed running through chapters vii., viii., ix., x., xi., xii., and giving them greatly the character of a continuous whole, though that whole may be made up of portions originally separate. The train of ideas which unites those chapters is, that Judah need not fear the hostile alliance of Syria and Ephraim against her, nor yet seek for help from Assyria or Egypt, if only she will trust in her own LORD, and true Protector; that since she will not trust in Him, she shall be herself overwhelmed by the heathen powers she calls in, and thus punished for her own loss of faith, and propensity to idols, even though these powers deliver her from her immediate alarm; but that at the last a righteous king shall reign in Sion over the restored remnant of both Judah and Ephraim, and all the nations of the earth shall acknowledge his dominion. And a similar thread of thought may be found running through the two chapters now before us, — which open with the destruction of Damascus and Israel; refer the calamities of the latter to his abandonment of his true LORD, who shall yet preserve a remnant of His people; and predict the destruction of the Assyrian as soon as he has fulfilled his office of the scourge of God, and the actual recognition of the Name of the LORD of hosts by Egypt and Ethiopia. There is an essential resemblance between the two, with a difference in the proportions of their parts: Damascus and Ephraim become less prominent in the latter than the former, while the slight mention of Egypt in verse 18. of chapter vii., apparently indicating that the politicians of the day were just thinking of the possibility of an alliance with that power, is replaced by a reference to the altered state of things when that alliance was actively promoted by the government of Hezekiah, as their only support against Assyria. But no date can easily be fixed for a composition of which the beginning seems closely connected with the first year of Ahaz, while the end points towards the fourteenth of Hezekiah, — unless, indeed, we suppose with Grotius that the prophet here refers to a second destruction of Damascus just before that of Samaria, which was completed in the sixth year of Hezekiah; but of this we have no account in history, though there is nothing improbable in it. It will only remain, then, in support of the unity of these two chapters, to suppose that, though originally written at dif-

ferent times, they were blended into one by Isaiah himself, with such obliterations of the original dates, or evidence of dates, as the fusion might seem to him to require. Such revisions, and consequent obliterations, by the author himself are common in modern books, where we can trace the process. Biographical puzzles may one day arise from the fact that there exists a manuscript of some of Coleridge's poems, in his own hand, where 'Mary' is found instead of the 'Sara' of the published editions: and the higher criticism may expend its powers in explaining how the reprint of Sir J. Stephen's article in No. 136. of the 'Edinburgh Review,' notices a book published ten years after the date of that number. It is not material in which way we decide the present doubt, or whether we leave it undecided.

'Damascus,' says Alexander, 'is still the most flourishing city in western Asia. It is also one of the most ancient. It is here mentioned as the capital of a kingdom, called Syria of Damascus, to distinguish it from other Syrian principalities, and founded in the reign of David by Rezon. (1 Kings, xi. 23, 24.) It was commonly at war with Israel, particularly during the reigns of Benhadad and Hazael, so that a three years' peace is recorded as a long one. (1 Kings, xxii. 1.)' With the alliance of its last king Rezin with Pekah, king of Israel, and its results, we are already familiar.

There are two Aroers mentioned on the east of Jordan, one near the Arnon, and the other to the north, and near the Ammonite city of Rabbah*; and the cities of Aroer here spoken of may be the cities and villages of Gad and Reuben in the district between the two Aroers, or more immediately about the northern one, which will connect them with the deportation of Tiglath-Pileser, referred to on former occasions.

The prophet threatens the two nations with a common destruction; the glory of Damascus shall be as the glory of Israel in the day in which the strength of the latter is wasted away with the emaciation of mortal disease, and his wealth is carried away as the whole crop of corn is carried away in harvest time. But then Isaiah substitutes an image not so strong: the gleaner follows the reaper of corn, and leaves nothing behind;

* Josh. xii. 2., xiii. 16. 25.; Numb. xxxii. 34.

but the most active shaking and beating of the olive-tree leaves a few berries on the uppermost boughs; and such a remnant will be left of Israel, though the once strong cities, which are left for its sake, will be left in the humblest, most defenceless condition. Such a remnant we know did, after the general deportation of the ten tribes, accept Hezekiah's invitation, and return to the right worship of the LORD at Jerusalem, as they did again in the time of Josiah.* In that day the judgment on the nation, and the mercy shown to the penitent few, will alike bear witness against their past idolatries and forgetfulness of the God of their salvation. And then Isaiah, in his usual manner, blends with the previous image of the Assyrians reaping a harvest of cities and their inhabitants, the new one of the Israelites transplanting heathen gods into their worship, and reaping God's abandonment of their nation as the fruit; while both images connect themselves in the mind with the thought of the actual wasting of fields and vineyards through the country, by the ruthless invaders.

On a former occasion Isaiah had said, 'The LORD spake unto me, saying, Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Siloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son; now therefore behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks; and he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.' And now he hears the sound of these mighty and many waters, while 'the nations rush like the rushing of many waters,' and 'make a noise like the noise of the seas.'† But he is calm and self-possessed as ever; he holds to his old faith and doctrine: 'God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee afar off, like chaff, when the wind whirls it from the threshing-floor on the hill-side.'

* 2 Chron. xxx. 11., xxxiv. 6, 9.

†

"Qualia fluctus

Æquorei faciunt, si quis procul audiat ipsos,
Tale sonat populus."

Ovid. *Met.* xv. 604. (Alexander from Clericus.)

Though the general sense of the eighteenth chapter is clear, there is great doubt as to the translation and meaning of particular phrases. It is not agreed whether 'shadowing,' or 'rustling wings,' or 'winged cymbal' be the proper rendering; nor whether (to leave less likely explanations) it refers to the mountain ridges, or the armies (as in chapter viii. 8.), or the boats with sails or shaped like the cymbal. It is questioned whether the 'sea' in verse 2. is the Nile, or the Red Sea, or the Mediterranean; and also what is the meaning of the epithets applied to the 'people' and 'nation' in verses 2. and 7., and whether these are to be taken to indicate Egypt and Ethiopia respectively, or both together as one power under Sabaco, or Tirhakah. But the general sense is that Egypt and Ethiopia, like Philistia and Moab, share the general panic at the approach of the great northern conqueror; and, as in the former case, Isaiah supposes ambassadors coming to Jerusalem, to propose an alliance against the common foe, and replies, as before, that the LORD will defend His own without the help of man.

Alexander, with his wonted clearness of judgment on such points, observes that there is no need to depart from the literal, which is, indeed, the better, sense of verse 3., and that we should read thus:—'All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, shall see as it were the lifting up of an ensign on the mountains, and shall hear as it were the blowing of a trumpet.' That is, the prophet calls on all the earth to expect the signal of a great deliverance, which shall come with a sudden blow from the LORD, who is at present waiting for the fulness of time, keeping the world in a suspense like the stillness of a noonday heat, yet giving those who trust in Him a quiet confidence, like that dewy cloud which supplies a certain freshness even in the midst of such heat.

We may notice again Isaiah's usual accuracy and appropriateness of thought, in the reference to the Egyptian traffic by water, and especially to the light papyrus boats—'Conseritur bibula Memphitis cyma papyro,'*—and to the nation 'whose land the rivers divide;' also the change, of the word 'nation'

* Lucan, iv. 136. So Pliny says (xiii., 11.), 'Ex ipso quidam papyro navigia texunt.' Both quoted by Lowth.

in verse 2. into 'people' in verse 7., — the former properly designating a heathen, and the latter a believing, people.

The remarkable correspondence between the predictions in verses 13, 14. of chapter xvii. and verses 3—7. of chap. xviii., with the historical account of the sudden overthrow of Sennacherib, has induced some of the Germans to pronounce that the latter is a myth framed to agree with the prophecy. As the reaction against the contrary assertion that it is a miraculous prediction, such a notion is perhaps not to be wondered at; but the really rational, as well as really Christian student, may come to the conclusion that if we simply and honestly take the facts of the case, the prophecy and the history as they actually are, it is possible to discover something more of the meaning, the law, of prophecy and the prophetic faculty, than has been discovered, or than will be discovered, by combining either scepticism or superstition with grammatical and antiquarian knowledge.

CHAPTER XIII.

EGYPTIAN DYNASTIES IN THE TIME OF ISAIAH — COTEMPORARY OR SUCCESSIVE. — HISTORICAL NOTICES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES. — ANARCHY. — INVASION OF SARGON. — SACK OF THEBES. — TREATY BETWEEN EGYPT AND ASSYRIA. — MULTITUDE OF GODS AND OF CASTES UNFAVOURABLE TO POLITICAL UNITY. — EXCLUSIVE WISDOM OF PRIESTHOOD. — THE CITY OF DESTRUCTION. — ALEXANDER AND PTOLEMY. — TEMPLE OF ONIAS. — SEPTUAGINT. — PHILO. — CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA. — BACON ON PROPHECY.

'THE Burden of Egypt.' Within the limits of Isaiah's lifetime, we find kings of the Tanitic, Saitic, and Ethiopian dynasties reigning in Egypt. Gesenius adopts the view which takes these dynasties to have been cotemporary, with their respective seats of government at Sais in the west, Tanis in the east, and Thebes in the south. In Zet, the last of the Tanitic (or 23rd) dynasty, he recognises the Sethos whom Herodotus mentions in connection with Sennacherib's overthrow: in the conquests, expulsions, or murders of Saitic by Ethiopian kings; and in the civil wars or anarchy which began and ended the fifteen years of the Dodecarchy, when the country was subdivided into twelve independent governments, he finds the counterpart of the political confusions which Isaiah depicts: and in the re-union of these governments into one monarchy by Psammeticus, he sees, with Grotius, the fulfilment of the prophet's threat that Egypt should be 'given into the hand of a cruel lord.' He then endeavours to show that the Dodecarchy was drawing to a close at the beginning of the reign of Manasseh, into which it is not impossible that Isaiah may have lived, and before which time he thinks that he could not have uttered this prophecy. But neither in Egypt, nor in any other country, can a general dissolution of government be other than the result of causes long at work, and long discernible to the enlightened statesman; and here, in particular, would it be the less necessary to account for the insight which could anticipate both anarchy and its termina-

tion in despotism, a few years before the occurrence of either, when we see that Isaiah exercised a prescience which discerned the general tendency of Egyptian history for ages after; and therefore the date given to this prophecy by its place in the book, would be at least as suitable as that of Gesenius, even if we accepted his interpretation of its contents.

But Hitzig has pointed out that it not only requires much straining of the chronology to bring Psammeticus to the date at which Gesenius fixes the beginning of his reign, but that the 'cruel lord' is a more fitting description of a foreign conqueror than a native prince, and that it is in all respects suitable to Sargon. M. Bunsen makes an interval of forty-one, instead of eighteen, years between the overthrow of Sennacherib and the re-union of the Egyptian states under Psammeticus; and he says, that all Egyptologists are agreed that Manetho's dynasties between the 18th and 30th are not synchronous, though he elsewhere explains that the regular succession of kings' names in these lists does not necessarily indicate that each was the actual ruler of the country during the period thus assigned to him, since their position may have been something like that of Louis XVII. and Louis XVIII. during the first French Republic and Empire.* It remains to be seen whether the translation of Sennacherib's Annals †, in which he distinguishes between 'the kings of Egypt' and the 'king of Meroë' under whose command they appear, will be established; and how far it must, in that case, restore the opinion (thus set aside by M. Bunsen) of the existence of cotemporary dynasties at the period in question—an opinion which is favoured by the language of Isaiah in the chapter before us, where he speaks of 'Egypt (not 'the Egyptians' in the original) set against Egypt, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom,' and mentions the 'princes of Zoan' or Tanis, and the 'princes of Noph,' or Memphis. I have given these specimens of the many perplexed and contradictory materials with which we have to deal, the rather because they may perhaps be taken as themselves among the indications that the political state of Egypt did at this time exhibit more or

* *Aegyptens Stelle*, i. 121., iii. 128 — 146.

† See page 172. above.

less of the anarchy here described by the prophet; and that the reason why Herodotus and the other historians received and transmitted such confused accounts, may have been that the events were confused. I now add such a reconciliation of the various facts and conclusions as I am able, and as seems to me most in accordance with the rest of the history of the period; premising that the general condition of the country and its politics must have been that of anarchy, revolution, and foreign invasion, whatever were the acts of particular kings and armies. The wise king Bocchoris, of Sais, who laboured to define and enforce the rights of his people by just and liberal laws, was conquered, and burnt alive by Sabacon, or Sabak I., the king of Ethiopia, and thus the founder of an Ethiopian dynasty in Egypt. His successor, Sabak II., whom Manetho calls Sebi-chôs, and the Jews So (Seve), made an alliance with Hoshea, king of Samaria, to support him in his refusal of continued vassalage to Shalmaneser, or Sargon. The first result of this was the capture of Samaria by the Assyrians, with the final deportation of the people, and the substitution of a colony from some other part of the Assyrian empire. The next (whether as motive or pretext) appears to have been Sargon's invasion of Egypt. In Isaiah xx. we find Sargon's general laying siege to Ashdod, the most southern of the Philistian fortresses, and the key of Egypt (or Assyria, as the case might be); as Gaza and El-Arish, respectively, were in later times: and in this king's own Annals it is said that Ashdod was (as well as Gaza and Askelon) at this time subject to Meroë or Ethiopia, and that its commandant, named Haleri, fled to Egypt when the fortress could no longer hold out. Sargon then probably advanced with his main army into Egypt. It was perhaps now * that he defeated the Egyptians in a pitched battle at Rabek, which Colonel Rawlinson identifies with On or Heliopolis; and to the same period we may best refer the destruction mentioned by Isaiah's cotemporary, Nahum, of the 'populous No-Ammon,' or Thebes, 'that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was from the

* Col. Rawlinson seems, indeed, to put this battle before the siege of Ashdod, though in connection with one of Khazita or Gaza. See his *Commentary* and *Outline*, already quoted.

sea: Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were her helpers. Yet she was carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.*

Sargon says that he received tribute from Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and that most interesting discovery† in Sennacherib's palace, of what can hardly be other than the seal of a treaty between Sabak and the Assyrian king, gives a literal (though by no means the highest) fulfilment of Isaiah's prediction of future amity between Egypt and Assyria: while the invasion of Sargon accomplished his threat of the 'cruel lord,' in the chapter before us, and his warning, in the chapter immediately succeeding, of the fate which would befall Egypt and Ethiopia both, within a short period of the siege of Ashdod, then in progress.

The name Mizraim, like Asshur, or Moab, is both that of the country and of the traditional founder: and here again we have Egypt as a person, the distinction being kept up in the original by the use of the masculine suffixes where our Version gives the neuter *it*. The opening words of this prophecy represent the LORD, 'who maketh the clouds his chariot' (probably here and elsewhere not without allusion to the cloud which led the Israelites, and hovered over the Mercy-seat), coming into Egypt to stir up civil war throughout the land. Egypt was famous for its multitude of gods, its minute political and social organisation of castes or tribes (verse 13.), and the wisdom of its sages and counsellors. Perhaps Isaiah, in his contemptuous mention of all these, and their inability to help the country in its anarchy, recognises in them the very causes of that anarchy. The multitude of idols, and of hereditary castes, evidently must have been main hinderances to national unity, since they supplied an indefinite number of separate *foci*, or ganglions, of social life, instead of the central heart and brain of the higher organisation: and the wisdom of the priests and the initiated kings would have the same tendency, since they had made it their exclusive possession, and employed it, not for the enlightenment and education of the

* Nahum, iii. 8—10.

† Layard's *Ninereh and Babylon*, p. 156.

people, but as the most effective instrument of the priest-craft and statecraft which controlled a population numerous and aggregated like herds of cattle, but debased, and therefore isolated, as men.

The realities of anarchy and civil war will confound the statesmen and their craft; they will be utterly at a loss to propose means to remedy the evil, or to see what the end will be if things are left to themselves; they will seek equally in vain for guidance from their idols and their soothsayers; and at last another reality, the despotic rule of a cruel conqueror and ruler, will supersede both them and the anarchy they could not face with all their shams.

The Nile (the *sea* as it is here and elsewhere called) was the source of fertility and life to Egypt, and its failure the certain occasion of general drought and famine; and Isaiah employs its failure as the symbol, a real part of the whole which it represents, to describe the universality of the national distress.

In the height of their calamity, they will think, first with fear, and then with hope, of the LORD who is thus executing His counsels to the confounding of their own; and they will turn their anxious looks to that people with whom their own nation has from ancient times been made to feel its relation, in blessings as well as in judgments, through a Joseph no less than a Moses. And then Isaiah describes the deliverance of Egypt from its oppressors, and its participation in the faith, and consequently in the blessing of Israel, in terms which were remarkably fulfilled in after times, again and again, with an amplitude which is at once an answer to the notion that he wrote after some one of the events, or that certain verses were interpolated to agree with some other. There is much doubt as to the verbal meaning of verse 18. ‘The city of *destruction*’ is the true translation of the original, but its obscurity has led to various conjectural emendations, for an account of which, with the arguments for or against each, I may refer the reader to Alexander or his authorities. He quotes with approbation Calvin’s explanation, that five-sixths of Egypt shall be saved, but the sixth part destroyed: an explanation characteristic of the stern reformer, who liked to contemplate judgment as an end, and not merely as a means, but which is far less suitable

to the context than that which changes 'destruction' for 'salvation,' and considers five to be a round number * to express 'many.' The interpretation of it as a proper name, Leontopolis, or Heliopolis, is contrary, says Gesenius, to the use of the word 'called,' which Isaiah always appropriates to symbolic appellations.† It was not this, but the next verse, which Onias referred to in favour of his temple at Leontopolis, and therefore the argument for its having been interpolated by him seems sufficiently refuted, even if it could be explained how the Jews of Palestine accepted such an interpolation from the so hated sectarian. The literal coincidences, however, between these details and the events, and among others between the promise of a 'saviour' and a 'great one,' and the titles of Alexander the Great and Ptolemy the Saviour, are noticeable and interesting; though he must be unobservant of like coincidences in all history and daily life who is driven by them to choose between miracle and forgery. The general idea of Isaiah, however we may explain details, is that the true faith of Israel will be widely spread through Egypt: the altar and the pillar may be rather poetical images, taken from the history of the patriarchs ‡, than attempts to predict or prescribe actual mode of worship, though it is not impossible that the prophet may have conceived of such helps to their faith being lawful in that distant land, though forbidden to the Jews, who were to sacrifice on no altar but at Jerusalem. In the main, however, he apparently contemplates Jerusalem itself as the actual place of worship, when he speaks of Egypt 'serving,' that is, worshipping the LORD, with Assyria and Israel: yet we must not overlook the freedom from formal restrictions in his language, which thus anticipates the time when the true worshippers should worship the Father in spirit and in truth, and neither in this or that mountain, nor in Jerusalem; and still less the Catholic spirit which could comprehend not only the comparatively friendly Egypt, but also Assyria, the cruellest of enemies, in Israel's own covenant of peace and blessing from the LORD.

* As it is in Genesis, xliii. 34., xlv. 22., xlvii. 2.

† Chap. iv. 3., lxi. 6., lxii. 4.

‡ Grotius refers to Joshua, xxii. 10—34.

The fulfilment of these promises to Egypt was ample ; first beginning with the overthrow of Sargon's successor, Sennacherib, and the friendly intercourse with Hezekiah in the latter years of his reign ; and then extending through successive generations, beyond the troubles of the Dodecarchy, the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar, and the mad cruelty of Cambyses. Alexander the Great delivered them from the grievous Persian yoke, and he and his successors greatly favoured the people and improved the country. He settled a great many Jews in Alexandria, giving them equal privileges with the Macedonians ; and this Hebrew immigration was still farther promoted by Ptolemy Soter, so that Philo reckoned that in his time there were a million Jews in the country. The temple of Onias, the Septuagint version of the Bible, the books of the Apocrypha, the philosophy and theology of Philo, indicate not only what these Jews were in themselves, but enable us to infer with certainty how great must have been their example and influence in humanising the Egyptians, and bringing them to the knowledge and worship of the true God. And still more were these results apparent, still more amply was this prophecy fulfilled, when Alexandria became one of the great centres of the Christian Church. There are other instances as real, but there is hardly one more obvious, of the correctness of Lord Bacon's rule that, in these interpretations, we must 'allow that latitude which is agreeable and familiar unto divine prophecies ; being of the nature of their Author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day ; and therefore are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have springing and germinant accomplishment throughout many ages ; though the height or fulness of them may refer to some one age.' *

* *Advancement of Learning*, book ii. 3.

CHAPTER XIV.

SARGON, SHALMANESER, TARTAN. — THE SIEGE OF ASHDOD. — SHEBNA'S POLICY OF ALLIANCES. — ISAIAH'S SYMBOLICAL PROTEST AGAINST IT — HE WALKS NAKED AND BAREFOOT. — ISAIAH'S POLICY PROBABLY MORE EXPEDIENT — CERTAINLY MORE BEFITTING ISRAEL'S PLACE IN UNIVERSAL HISTORY.

VITRINGA maintained the conclusion of Sanctius and Jungmann, that *Sargon* was another name for *Shalmaneser*. Colonel Rawlinson treats this as now proved, while Dr. Hincks considers it to be still doubtful, at least: but they both hold it quite ascertained that he is the *Sargina* of the inscriptions at Khorsabad, as well as the builder of that city, the site of which retained the name of *Scrghun* as late as the Arab conquest: and the latter interpreter promises us hereafter a detailed account from these inscriptions, of the reduction of Ashdod on the occasion of which Isaiah here treats in the chapter now before us, and of which I have just spoken by anticipation. Tartan is said to be, not a proper name, but the common title of the Assyrian commanders in chief.* After he had taken Ashdod, it possibly continued in the power of the Assyrians till it was besieged, as Herodotus relates (ii. 157.), for twenty-nine years by Psammeticus. It is now a little village, retaining its old name.

In the third year of Hezekiah, Hoshea, king of Samaria, had brought Shalmaneser's overwhelming power upon him by refusing his accustomed tribute, and calling in So, king of Egypt, to support him in his rebellion. Yet this was now the policy contemplated by the government and people of Hezekiah. The vassalage into which Ahaz had brought Judah was no

* Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 148, note.

doubt intolerable: Isaiah's repeated references to the 'oppressors,' 'the spoilers,' and the 'robbers,' indicate what we might expect from the character of the Assyrians, — that the tribute was almost the whole produce of the country, such as has been requisite to buy off the hordes of Huns, Tartars, or Mahrattas, of other times: and since the Assyrian armies were constantly on the borders of the little kingdom of Judah — during the sieges of Samaria, Tyre, Ashdod, and elsewhere — probably all payments were occasionally insufficient to protect the Jews from the rapacious licence of a soldiery whose royal leader could fix 'three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold,' as the price of amity with Hezekiah, and then immediately on receiving payment, march on Jerusalem with the avowed determination to 'destroy it utterly,' after deporting the inhabitants. Any prospect might seem better than the existing misery: and if Hoshea's alliance with Sebichòs had only hastened the ruin of the kingdom of Ephraim, Judah hoped for a more successful result from the like policy. We have, perhaps, in chapter xviii. 2., an indication that the Ethiopico-Egyptian king had himself proposed such an alliance; and it is plain from chapters xxxi. xxxii., that the Jewish government made advances on their side; while, in the chapter before us, Isaiah seems to describe the general feeling of his countrymen, when he speaks of 'Ethiopia their expectation, and Egypt their glory.' A policy of expediency, in which one state is to be played off against another, and perhaps by one weaker than either, always seems the height of wisdom to the crafty diplomatists who play the game, and worse than folly to the looker on: and such was the policy of Shebna, Hezekiah's minister, — in his own eyes no doubt 'a politician who could circumvent God,'* — and such the opinion of it entertained by Isaiah, one of whose energetic protests against it we have before us. He, as well as his children, was 'a sign to the people,' and not only like them by his name and presence, but he now appeared — probably while the result of the siege of Ashdod was still doubtful, and the public expectation in Jerusalem at its height — naked and barefoot, that is, without the hair garment which,

* *Hamlet*, act 5. scene 1.

girt with a leathern girdle, was the prophet's dress, as it was of the Christian ascetics in after times.* He appeared, in fact, as the writers of the middle ages would, unconscious of homeliness, have expressed it, 'in his shirt:' for this is a usual meaning of the phrase, 'naked,' in Hebrew, as in all languages, and one which is moreover indicated here by the 'barefoot,' which would be otherwise superfluous, as well as by the additional description of the captives he figured. The Masoretic punctuation joins the 'three years' with the words that follow, in which case the sentence may be rendered 'a three years' sign,' and understood not that Isaiah walked for three years, but that the event was to occur in three years: and the prediction would thus somewhat correspond in form with that in chapter xvi. 14. Vitranga and Lowth suppose that, in fact, Isaiah walked three days, 'a day for a year;'† others consider the symbolical act to have been occasional, though repeated throughout the three years. There is nothing improbable in this last view, it is that most in agreement with the letter of the text, and there is an appearance of the chapter being a brief account of the three years' preaching (perhaps the time the siege was going on), during which Isaiah used to appear as described, and speaking to this effect. Even taken thus literally, this symbolic act is far less difficult to comprehend than some of those of other prophets. But in all cases a part of the difficulty arises, no doubt, from our inability to realise adequately the habits and feelings of an ancient and eastern people. To those of Isaiah's countrymen who were not hardened against all such impressions, the sight of the prophet, and the sound of his warning voice, in the streets and market-places of Jerusalem, while he showed forth the impending fate of their expected deliverers, and thus led them to infer their own, would have been full of significance. I have noticed before the practice of driving the prisoners of war naked and like herds of cattle: the word here translated 'lead away' is that usually applied to leading or driving cattle; and the monuments of Egypt, as well as Assyria, still depict such strings of captives, quite naked,

* See 2 Kings, i. 8.; Zech. xiii. 4.; Matt. iii. 4. Winer compares the pallium of the Greek philosophers with the prophet's mantle.

† Compare Numbers, xiv. 34.; Ezekiel, iv. 6.

or with merely an apron, and frequently with their hands bound with their own hair. One of Belzoni's drawings of tombs at Thebes, says Gesenius, exhibits both Ethiopian and Egyptian prisoners in this way.

We see from Isaiah's subsequent denunciations of the Egyptian alliance, that the ground of them was, that the people of Israel should trust in their own LORD and King for deliverance, and in no other power whatever. Though he encouraged Hezekiah to the boldest defiance and most resolute resistance of Sennacherib at the last, there is no indication that he advised or approved his first refusal of the tribute which Ahaz had consented to pay: on the contrary, the whole tenour of the prophet's discourses is, that the subjection to the Assyrian yoke was a needful though harsh discipline for the nation; that the LORD would himself effect their deliverance in due time; and that they were to wait patiently till then.* This simple and entire trust in the LORD, as the Head of the nation, and of each member of it in particular, — as their actual Ruler, and ever-present Friend, watching over them every moment with the care of a Husband and a Father, — this is the master-light of all Isaiah's philosophy, moral and political, and the one lesson which in a hundred forms he is continually teaching the people. Whether he was right, whether this is indeed the one thing 'which

* As a modern writer has charged Jeremiah with treachery worthy of death, in preaching submission to Nebuchadnezzar, it is worth while to see how his conduct looked to one who had opportunity, and was competent, to interpret it by the political experience of his own day. Niebuhr, writing Jan. 10. 1809, of the abortive desires of Stein and others to throw off the yoke of Napoleon, says, "I told you, as I told every one, how indignant I felt at the senseless prating of those who talked of desperate resolves as of a tragedy. Ever since the peace of Tilsit, my maxims have been those which Phocion preached to the Athenians of his age; and nowhere have I seen, among the declaimers on the other side, a Demosthenes, or even a Hyperides, but many a Diæus. To bear our fate with dignity and wisdom, that the yoke might be lightened, was my doctrine, and I supported it with the advice of the prophet Jeremiah, who spoke and acted very wisely, living as he did under King Zedekiah, in the times of Nebuchadnezzar, though he would have given different counsel had he lived under Judas Maccabæus, in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes: 'Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.'" — *Niebuhr's Life*, vol. i. p. 261.

makes a nation happy and keeps it so,' the reader must decide for himself: I will only point out that to us, judging after the event, the good sense and sound practical statesmanship of Isaiah's policy, and the folly of that of Shebna and the public opinion which supported his government, are alike obvious. It was no doubt an admirable policy for the interests of Egypt, that Palestine, with its mountain-defiles and strong fortresses, should consent to be her northern military frontier, and that Hebrew blood and treasure should be expended in maintaining the fortified cities of Samaria and Jerusalem, Lachish and Libnah, against the advance of Assyria. If the invaders overcame these obstacles at last, Egypt would meanwhile have gained some years of security at no cost to herself, and would be then better able to meet a half-exhausted foe; while, if the resistance of the Hebrews was successful, they themselves would have been so weakened as to be at the mercy of the ally they had been serving too well. In no case could Israel be other than a sufferer: if the contest of the great belligerents could have been fought out in some other country than Palestine, there might have been a little more plausibility in Shebna's scheme for a balance of power, though even then the day of retribution might have been expected at last, from friend, if not from foe: but when Palestine itself must, in such a case, be 'the cockpit' of Asia and Africa, the one thing which sound policy indicated was, that it should, if possible, remain neutral. There was a moment of Israel's history (Ewald has finely remarked), when it seemed possible that David might have laid the foundations of an empire like that of Rome, as there was that Solomon might have led the way to the reign of a philosophy as sovereign as that of Greece: but the innate energy, the proper life of the nation, rejected these temptations to quit its appointed place in universal history; and like Rome and Greece, in their appointed spheres, and like every other nation worthy the name, it went resolutely forward, at whatever sacrifice of all its other and conflicting interests. Now, this appointed place and course was that of witnessing in its institutions, history, and literature, for what is sometimes called 'the religious idea,' but which a plain man may better name the fact that men stand in a real and actual relation to God, and that God is really and actually present

with men to uphold that relation at all times, and to educate them through it to know Him, and to show forth His image more and more. If, then, the Jews in the time of Isaiah could not secure the independence and other political interests of their country, without abandoning their right place in the world, they would have been bound in duty and reason to sacrifice these, and, as Isaiah taught, to cleave to the LORD at all hazards, and leave the event to Him. But, in fact, not only was a political neutrality their only sound policy, but they really were very likely to have succeeded in maintaining it, if it had been based on a national faith and practical piety. It does not need a special miracle, a suspension of the ordinary laws of the universe, to make true religion, with its fruits of virtue and honesty, the best policy, whether for a nation or an individual. The very case is already provided for in those laws as originally laid down. History and biography attest the fact sufficiently; though they show that the end is constantly effected through so many difficulties, or, as St. Paul would say, through so much weakness of the flesh, that nothing but the reality of the faith within could have supplied the necessary courage for enduring till the end.

CHAPTER XV.

ISAIAH, XXI. : A VISION IN A DREAM OR TRANCE. — BIBLE MEANING OF INSPIRATION. — DIVINATION. — ANCIENT ORACLES. — SPECIAL POWERS OF NATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS. — ONE GREECE, ONE SHAKSPEARE. — DISCERNMENT OF POLITICAL EFFECTS IN THEIR CAUSES LESS POSSIBLE NOW THAN FORMERLY. — 'THE DESERT OF THE SEA.' — THE PROPHET A WATCHMAN. — THE TRIBES OF ARABIA — SUBJECTED BY ASSYRIA.

THE school of commentators represented by Professor Alexander, find, in that part of Isaiah xxi. which relates to Babylon, 'wonderful coincidences with history, both sacred and profane, which could not be ascribed to Isaiah, or to any contemporary writer, without conceding the reality of prophetic inspiration.' These coincidences are the mention of the Medes and Persians, as the conquerors of Babylon; the night of festivity changed into a night of terror, corresponding with the statements of Herodotus, Xenophon, and Daniel, that the court was reveling when Cyrus took the city; the vivid picture of the equally historical surprise of the revellers by the enemy; the asses and camels which Herodotus and Xenophon describe as used for riding in the Persian armies, while the latter also represents their advancing two by two; and the breaking of all the idols by a nation who, Herodotus says, not only thought it unlawful to use images, but imputed folly to those who did it. The rationalists at first accepted the premises of this argument as unquestionable, but drew the conclusion that the prophecy was, in fact, written after the event; but they now admit that a politician or a poet writing shortly before the time could have foreseen such of these historical details as they allow to be fairly discoverable in the text, — just as Gesenius says is the case with the coincidences in Jeremiah's prophecies, the genuineness of

which he speaks of as undoubted. I have already pointed out how far these opponents appear to me to be advocating different sides of the same truth, and helping us towards a higher view which shall comprehend and reconcile all that is really true in both. And I have said all that I have to say on the historical and literary facts and arguments of the case. But there is one point to which, often as I have adverted to it, these words of Dr. Alexander's warn me that I must return, if I would sift the whole question of prophecy to the bottom.

The word 'inspiration,' in the passage just quoted from this learned commentator, is there lowered to a sense in which neither the Bible nor the Christian Church employs it*; and is used to designate a power of predicting events, such as the heathen oracles and the mediæval astrologers claimed, and by their cotemporaries were believed to exercise. It is commonly said that in the latter cases there was fraud or delusion, while the Hebrew prophets really possessed the gift: and there can be no doubt that the Jews generally, and very little doubt that Isaiah and the other prophets themselves, would have maintained that they were enabled, on particular occasions, to exercise such a gift of prediction; though the wise and religious among them, whether people or teachers, would not have allowed that it was in this gift that the reality of prophetic inspiration consisted. But conscience, no less than reason, forbids me to deny that the Greek and Roman oracles, and the astrologers of the middle ages, did utter numerous predictions which were fulfilled with no greater mixture of failures than those of the Hebrews, and which were of no less social and political importance to those to whom they were addressed. Cicero held that the reality of the power of divination was proved alike by the universal belief of the greatest sages, and the manifest correspondence between the

* The Prayer-Book (that authoritative manual of a large portion of the Christian Church in England) uses the word 'inspiration' in the true sense, in the first Collect of the Communion Service, 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit;' and in the Collect for the fifth Sunday after Easter, 'That by Thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good:' while the *fact* that such inspiration is the ordinary, habitual state of every member of Christ's Church, is asserted or implied in every sentence of the Book.

predictions and events of the oracle of Delphi in particular.* And Niebuhr denies that the merely sceptical arguments solve the question †: and his observations suggest the thought whether the power did exist, not as a miraculous witness of the true faith, but as a human endowment of the earlier ages, like the powers of language-making and myth-making, which have been already noticed.

If the reader still thinks that such an insight into the future, and such an instinct beyond the limits of that insight, as I here claim for Isaiah, are beyond any known powers, intellectual or imaginative, of the human mind, I would beg him to consider that there are many instances in the history of the world of a single man appearing with powers unparalleled by those of any other; and in like manner each nation, ancient and modern, that deserves the name, had or has a special vocation for which it has exhibited powers which no other has shown. There has been but one Homer, one Socrates, one Raphael, one Shakspeare: the greater part even of intellectual and educated men live and die without any perceptible trace of the gift which enabled Newton to grasp very complicated theorems with intuitive apprehension; and Mozart in infancy could compose music with a knowledge of the laws of harmony which few grown men could

* See Coleridge's *Lay Sermons*, p. 91. (3rd edit.); and Grote's *History of Greece*, ii. 339. Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, ii. (Divination.)

† "These oracles of the ancients were a strange thing. It is easy to say it was all an artifice of the priests; but these priests themselves were a part of the people. Besides, such explanations did well enough for the time of the French philosophers as they were called; but we want deeper inquiries at this day. Why is it they were so long respected by the people? How does it happen that we find them in some shape or other, elsewhere? Did man, in those early periods, stand nearer to nature? Lieber's *Reminiscences of Niebuhr*, p. 225. The following passage is in the like tone:—"It seems that civilization must have started by some immediate inspiration; for whence comes it, that no tribe, though discovered centuries ago in a savage state, has advanced since then, except by some impulse from foreign nations already civilized? The mythology, too, of almost every nation, whose civilization dates from remote periods, teaches that a god or goddess descended to instruct man in agriculture, the use of iron, and other elementary arts. I hardly can conceive how man could have invented by himself the complicated process of baking bread, at so early a period as that in which we find him already provided with this indispensable article." *Ibid.* p. 227.

acquire by any study. There has been one Greece, from which the world derives its philosophy and art; one Rome, to which it owes its laws and politics; and what would the world be now, and to the end of time, if there were no England? And we neither deny these facts, nor call them miracles. And before we hurry to a conclusion, let us ask ourselves whether the Hebrew nation may not have had a vocation of its own, and whether Isaiah may not have been a great and typical man in that nation, and neither the one nor the other be the less real or the less human for all that. It may be added that one characteristic difference between ancient and modern nations is that our social relations are far more complicated, — the intricate results of so many more causes than were at work in the ancient world. Consequently an intuitive discernment of causes and effects was more possible then than now, for philosophers tell us that every event could be certainly predicted if we knew all the causes that are at work to produce it, seeing that like effects always come of like causes.

‘The burden of the desert of the sea.’ This enigmatical name for Babylon, was no doubt suggested by the actual character of the country in which the city stood. It was an endless breadth or succession of undulations ‘like the sea,’ without any cultivation or even any tree: low, level, and full of great marshes; and which used to be overflowed by the Euphrates, till the whole plain became a sea, before the river was banked in by Semiramis, as Herodotus says.* But it is not improbable that the prophet alludes also to the social and spiritual desert which Babylon was to the nations over which its authority extended, and especially to the captive Israelite: and perhaps to the multitude of the armies which it poured forth like the waters of the sea. So Ezekiel tells the Jews that they shall be led by God into ‘the wilderness of the people,’ as their fathers were into the wilderness of the land of Egypt, contrasting the human with the natural wilderness — alike devoid of true life and order. And St. John, in the Apocalypse, adopts the same imagery in describing Babylon, the dramatic representative of Rome: ‘I will show thee the judgment of the great whore

* Herod, i. 184.; Grote’s *Hist. of Greece*, ix. 43.

that sitteth upon many waters. . . . So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness. . . . And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. . . . After these things I saw another angel, and he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen.'

This prophecy has more the character of a vision than any other in the book, excepting that in the sixth chapter. It seems to indicate that the writer had been in a state of trance, perhaps somewhat like that which Coleridge describes in the introduction to his *Kubla Khan, or a Vision in a Dream*, where he says he 'continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that, indeed, can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, paper, and ink, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines,' which he there gives, but of which the current was abruptly cut off. We may get some light too from our ordinary experience in dreams, here as on chapter vi.

The unity of the whole is not less striking than the vividness of its parts; but it is a unity derived from the imagination, and not from the logical faculty; and it overleaps the bonds of time and space, and brings remote objects together, just as the imagination of the dreamer does, without any sense of incongruity.

'It cometh:'—a man in a dream would not ask what;—he simply feels that something terrible, and from a terrible land, is sweeping over the scene, like one of the whirlwinds which still, as then, drive furiously up from the southern deserts.* Then he sees that there is reason enough for this terror, for the land—his own land—is filled with spoilers, robbing by fraud or violence: just what, in fact, Isaiah and his countrymen experienced as the condition of their daily existence during many years of his life.

* See Layard's account of the these 'shergis, or burning winds from the south;' *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 364. where he quotes this verse of Isaiah.

He recognises at once the ‘terrible land,’ ‘the desert of the sea,’ from which the evil has come: he calls Elam and Media to ‘go up and besiege,’ and in a moment all the sighing of the oppressed has ceased.

By a new act of the imagination, he identifies himself with the besieged city; and experiences all the sensations of extreme terror, as he sees, in an instant of time, the preparations for a feast, and the setting the watch, the actual feasting, and the call to arms without and within the walls; and knows at once, as an inhabitant of the city, what his doom is.

Then he half returns to the consciousness that he is Isaiah, a prophet in Jerusalem, and no Babylonian, and explains how this catastrophe had been revealed to him. He is still overmastered by his imagination, but it takes a new direction. He was accustomed to wait whole days and nights in fasting, meditation, and prayer, when seeking to know the mind of the LORD; and these special acts were but the outward and occasional expressions of a life of spiritual waiting and watching,—of patient meditation upon God’s word and works, and no less patient waiting to see the political events of his own day, however dark and unpromising, open out into results according with that word and those works in the old times. The politics of his nation were involved in all the prophet’s hopes and prayers; and as the watchman looks from the watchtower in time of war, so he stood on the watchtower of divinely illuminated reason, and looked out into the world,—taking a comprehensive view of all that was passing or coming there; discerning the significance and importance of each event; and accordingly either warning the nation, for whom he kept guard, of approaching evil, or comforting them with the announcement of deliverance.* And thus his prophetic office and faculty now represent themselves to him, and he describes them, as his setting a watchman, by command of the LORD, to watch and report what he sees. This watchman—no other than the projected form of the prophet himself—stands on an ideal watchtower, and sees a host of chariots, horses, asses, camels, approaching; and, after listening for a mo-

* Compare Isaiah, lii. 8., lvi. 10.; Jeremiah, vi. 17.; Ezekiel, xxxiii. 2.; Habak. ii. 1.

ment with the eagerness of a watchful sentry, he gives the alarm in the phrase familiar to the Hebrew shepherd — ‘A lion!’ And he then reports in detail that he had watched continually night and day, for many days, when at last he saw the invading army, which the prophet, in the co-instantaneousness of all the parts of a vision, was already become aware of, before he — the other self — could report it. ‘Lord’ is the title appropriated to God, and not equivalent to ‘Sir’ as our version implies; which heightens, without at all confusing, the visionary character of the whole, by making the prophet recognise his own individuality, and the fact that he himself is the watchman, and set there by the LORD. The watchman speaks again after an interval, and reports that all is over, — Babylon and her gods are fallen. The watchman may be conceived as at first standing on the walls of Babylon, and then transferred in a moment of time to Jerusalem; but it is simpler to leave the ideal indefiniteness of the text.

The prophet utters a half ironical, half compassionate exclamation, on the fate of his country’s enemy; and concludes by declaring, both to that enemy and to his own countrymen, that what he has thus declared he has heard from the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel.

There are different opinions as to the true rendering of details. Some suppose verses 1. and 2. to describe the sufferings of Babylon on the invasion of the Medes and Persians; Ewald and Alexander say it is more correct to read, in verses 7. and 8., ‘And should he see . . . let him hearken;’ some understand, ‘he cried like a lion for loudness;’ and some refer the ‘threshing’ to Israel. On the last two renderings I would notice that I have followed Jeremiah’s apparent mode of understanding them*, which also seems to me the more graphic.

The genuineness of the rest of the chapter is not disputed; but modern criticism has not decided whether the two ‘Burdens’ of ‘Dumah’ and ‘Arabia’ are separate prophecies, or parts of one prophecy, in the margin of which the two titles would then stand: nor whether Dumah is the Arab tribe of Dumah (descended from Ishmael†, and having perhaps given

* Chapter l. 44., li. 33. With the latter compare Micah, iv. 12, 13.

† Genesis, xxv. 14.; 1 Chron. i. 30.

its name to the Dumah Eljandel still found on the confines of Arabia and Syria), or an enigmatical name for Edom, as the Septuagint supposes, and as the mention of Seir just after seems to indicate, though the latter may be taken as referring only to the tract of desert and mountain in that quarter. To which we, who accept the prophecy against Babylon as also written by Isaiah, have to add the question whether both, or the former of these, should be taken as its continuation. And, lastly, what is the purport of these seven verses?

The image of the watchman suggests a connection between the first and second portions; and the names Dumah, Seir, Arabia, Dedanim, Tema, and Kedar, between the second and third. And if we take the text as it stands, the general sense will apparently be, that at the time when Judah was actually suffering the oppressions of the 'treacherous dealer,' and the 'spoiler,' but was promised deliverance by Isaiah, he is applied to by the Arab tribes, whose caravans conducted through Arabia the course of a commerce which even then might exchange the tin of Britain with the ivory of India: they inquire whether they may hope to escape the great robber, and the prophet replies, after a hesitation which seems half contemptuous, half indicative of the obscurity in which the future was involved to him, that they will not escape. Gesenius observes that, though the voice calling to the watchman out of Seir may without improbability be taken merely as a poetic image, it is also quite probable that it refers to an actual inquiry. It was not less likely that the neighbouring nations should consult a prophet of the LORD, than that Balak should apply to Balaam, Ahaziah consult Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, or Cræsus the oracle of Delphi.

The tribes who traversed, as they still traverse, the deserts of Arabia and Syria, with their flocks and herds, with trade-caravans, or on plundering forays, are chiefly traced, in the records of Genesis, to Abraham, through Hagar and Keturah, — Nebaioth, Dedan, and Tema as sons of Ishmael, and Kedar as the grandson of Keturah; but some also to Joktan and to Cush. We find these Arabs — Midianites, Amalekites, and children of the east — invading Israel, in the time of the Judges; paying tribute to Jehoshaphat and Uzziah; and having one of their

settlements taken possession of by the Simeonites in the reign of Hezekiah, after they had exterminated the tribe,—an event which may possibly be connected with the present prophecy.* Dedan and Tema are elsewhere† connected with each other, and with Edom and other northern tribes of Arabia: Tema is mentioned by Ptolemy; and Kedar by Pliny, by Stephanus of Byzantium, and by Theodoret, who says that in his time the Kedranites pastured their flocks in the province of Babylon: and Bochart traces to Dedan, the traders in the ivory and ebony of India, the name of Daden, an island in the Persian Gulf; while Seetzen found Tema in the caravan-route between Mecca and Damascus. In Genesis, xxxvii., and Job, vi. 19., we have the caravans mentioned, and in Ezekiel, xxvii., an ample account of the trade which they carried on; while Kedar, known by its tents of black hair-cloth, and rich in the flocks which formed its staple commerce, seems to have been distinguished from these purely trading tribes, by greater estrangement from civilised intercourse and courtesy, as might have been expected from their different habits.‡ Colonel Rawlinson finds the names of Tehaman (Teman), Damun, Kidar (Kedar), Khagarin (Hagarenes), and Nabaut (Nebaioth), in a list of ‘the Aramæan tribes who lined the Tigris and Euphrates,’ subjugated by Sargina, and from whom he carried off ‘an enormous booty’ of men, women, and cattle, of which the kinds and numbers are specified. And among the countries whose kings brought ‘their accustomed tribute’ to Sennacherib, the same learned investigator reads that of Huduma, or Edom.§

* Judges, vi. 3.; 2 Chron. xvii. 11., xxvi. 7.; 1 Chron. iv. 39. 43.

† Jeremiah, xxv. 23., xlix. 7, 8.; Ezek. xxv. 13.

‡ Song of Solomon, i. 5.; Isaiah, xlii. 11., lx. 7.; Ezek. xxvii. 21.; Psalm cxx. 5.; Jeremiah, ii. 10.

§ *Outline*, pp. 19. 22.

CHAPTER XVI.

ISAIAH XXII.: POLITICAL PARTIES AT JERUSALEM. — SHEBNA AND THE MAJORITY. — ELIAKIM AND THE MINORITY. — ISAIAH'S ATTACK ON SHEBNA. — PREPARATIONS FOR THE SIEGE. — TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM. — SITE OF SION. — SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE AND KING. — FALL OF SHEBNA. — SUFFERINGS OF MODERN NATIONS FROM INVASION. — MORAL AND RELIGIOUS RESULTS. — PRUSSIA. — SWITZERLAND.

To an ordinary Englishman, accustomed all his life to hear denunciations of the policy of the government followed by anticipations of the downfall of its author, and of the benefits which the country must expect from the new policy of his successor in the ministry, it may seem superfluous to examine seriously the notion that the twenty-second chapter of Isaiah consists of two separate prophecies, or that its unity needs proving by such arguments as he will find in the commentators.

The date of the prophecy is evidently the fourteenth year of Hezekiah; and a comparison of the accounts in the books of Kings and Chronicles with the discourse before us, enables us, at the end of twenty-five centuries, to see the very form and pressure of those ancient times. There is indeed a difficulty from that peculiarity of Hebrew grammar noticed before, which permits an interchange of the past and future tenses of the verb in such a way as to make it a matter of discussion with translators which of the two, or whether the present tense instead of either, will best express the force of the original. The verbs in the description of the preparation for the siege, with all its circumstances, are translated by Gesenius and others as presents,—they understanding them to describe the facts as Isaiah sees them in his mind's eye, and just before their actual occurrence. No doubt this is the true view in the main, and we may be well content with it, if the slight haze which it leaves over certain details of the picture cannot be dispelled by

any modern insight: but it is obvious that there is a haze. The alarm of the city and its reckless jollity, the repairs of the fortifications and the array of the enemy in the neighbouring valleys, imply some lapse of time during their course; and as the whole conditions of ancient and Eastern life require us to believe that this prophecy was spoken, and not first published in writing as it might be now, the question presents itself whether any Hebrew scholarship can fix the exact point of time at which it was spoken, and so distinguish the facts which the prophet saw with his bodily eye from those present to him in vision. No such distinction may be possible now; the master-artist himself may have obliterated any original differences between the actual and the ideal objects of his discourse; but thus much at least we may see,—that the actual facts, to which Isaiah could at the moment point with his hand, were such as to enable his hearers to follow him in filling up the blank portions of the canvas. If when he spoke they could see people on the housetops looking wistfully in the direction of Lachish, at the siege of which the Assyrian army was at the moment lying, it would seem hardly a figure of speech to tell them that the valleys of Hinnom and Rephaim, beyond which their eyesight might not carry them, were full of Persian cavalry, though in fact they saw nothing but green corn waving, nor recognised as yet any sign of an enemy along the mile or two of the western highway which might be visible from Jerusalem:—for they well knew that less than twenty-five miles of that road would take them into the heart of Sennacherib's camp. And so of the rest. And if the present and the future of that day have long become one ideal past to us, the whole harmonious picture is not the less true to the life,—true to the old Hebrew life which actually was then and there, and which is still here for us to see; and true no less to the human life of our own and every other day.

Let us then look at the picture as it is, after noticing its significant and somewhat enigmatical title, analogous to that of the previous prophecy against Babylon. It is apparently taken—we need not doubt by Isaiah himself—from the expression in verse 5., which seems to be itself suggested by the fact that it is in vision that the prophet sees the trouble and spoiling of

the city which to his outward eye was at the moment showing signs of self-confidence. Titles stand first, but then, as now, were written last, to designate the subject written of; and this prophecy is a vision of the political state and prospects of the city which stood in the midst of the valleys of Judah, and of the political party and minister who ruled the city at that time. Perhaps the thought that this city was the centre and source of all prophetic vision,—that ‘out of Zion should go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem,’ at all times and for all peoples,—may have added to Isaiah’s sense of the propriety of the present title; but the other is more likely to have first suggested it.

Hezekiah had from the beginning of his reign given proof of his faith in the LORD, as the King whose viceroy he was; but we can see that he had inherited something of the weakness of his father’s character, along with an authority greatly controlled by the nobles, and by what we now call a bureaucracy, or government by narrow and worldly-minded officials, who, though unable to take any far-seeing or comprehensive views of the interests of the country, were too firmly seated in power to be dislodged. At the head of these was Shebna, of whom it has been conjectured, from his father’s name never being mentioned (as was usual, and as we find done in the case of his fellow-ministers*), and from his being engaged in making a family sepulchre, that he was a man of obscure origin; while his name, which does not seem to be Hebrew, and by which no one else is called in the Bible, has been supposed to indicate that he was a foreigner. It was by the advice of Shebna, or of the party of which he was now the head, that Hezekiah took the false step of refusing the tribute to Assyria, which Ahaz had pledged his kingdom to, and of looking to Egypt for support in this revolt. The kingdom of Israel had done the like, and was annihilated; Ashdod had since fallen; the fortified cities of Judah were meeting the same fate, one after another; while the Assyrian armies were encamped in the south-west of Judah, apparently on the road to Egypt, but expecting and expected to swallow up the little Jewish kingdom easily by the way: and Hezekiah

* 2 Kings, xviii. 18.

now endeavoured to deprecate Sennacherib's vengeance by sending to him all the gold and silver he could collect, stripping the Temple of the treasures and ornaments with which, during the previous years of his reign, it had been his glory to have made good the like act of his father Ahaz. Whether out of sheer treachery, or because he had reason to question the sincerity of Hezekiah's submission (for the communications between Judah and Egypt may have been continued notwithstanding), Sennacherib took the money, and immediately sent Tartan, Rab-saris, and Rab-shakeh to Jerusalem, with a powerful detachment from the main army with which he was himself besieging Lachish, an important fortress about twenty-five miles southwest of the capital. The Assyrian generals, however, found the city prepared against a surprise, and the courage of the king and people too high to yield to their persuasions or threats; and the enterprise failed, only to be followed by the overthrow of the main army itself.

When Rab-shakeh and the enemy's force actually arrived under the walls, the political power had passed from the hands of Shebna to Eliakim, as Isaiah had foretold: not, however, by a literal fulfilment of the prophet's vehement denunciations; but by the former minister being reduced from the first office of lord high treasurer, or lord steward, to that of secretary.* He may have had business talents too useful, or his influence may have been still too great, to permit that complete dismissal which the single-minded prophet, who did not consider it his duty to balance and reconcile conflicting interests and expediencies, thought, and no doubt rightly, was the moral desert of his character and acts. Probably this very attack on the minister, which reminds one of the words by which Cicero drove out Catiline when too strong to be attacked by more material weapons, may have given the last blow to Shebna's power: he had been hitherto supported by that selfish and time-serving majority of nobles, priests, and people, whom Isaiah (like his cotemporaries) is always denouncing, and which was too strong for Hezekiah and the minority of God-fearing men to overthrow, till the present time, when indications that their policy

* 2 Kings, xviii. 18.

was about to bring utter ruin on the state, will have made it suddenly and universally unpopular. The political power of the nobles, the influence of the priesthood and the prophets both with kings and people, and the extent to which these balanced each other and limited the regal authority, are discernible throughout the Hebrew history. David was for many years unable to dismiss Joab his commander in chief, though his character and acts were most repugnant to him; 'the sons of Zeruiah were too strong for him;' and on his death-bed he advised Solomon not to lose, through any scruple, an opportunity for breaking the bondage, if such were offered him by any new delinquency. Rehoboam's insolence to his nobles cost him the greater part of his kingdom. The whole policy, ecclesiastical and civil, of Joash was changed by the influence of the nobles on the death of Jehoiada, the high priest. Isaiah and his cotemporaries* describe the wealth and the rapacity, which imply political power, of the aristocracy: and in Jeremiah's narrative† we see that Zedekiah might well complain that 'the king was not he who could do anything against them.' And the independence and courage of the prophets, and the manner in which they awakened a public opinion in favour of truth, and justice, and the fear of the LORD, in the face of a persecution which often ended in their death, is not less noticeable. We cannot decide how far Hezekiah might have protected Isaiah at this time from direct violence; but the prophet, who not only openly denounced the policy of Shebna and the other 'scornful men who ruled this people in Jerusalem,' but traced its origin to their irreligion, selfishness, luxury, and oppression of the poor, and declared that God was about to bring them to speedy judgment for these things, must have been a brave man; for he would know it to be too probable that, if matters came to issue between him and his opponents, 'the king was not he who could do anything against them.'

Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, was no doubt already designated by Hezekiah and the God-fearing minority, as the proper successor of Shebna: and Isaiah's prediction that he would be a

* Amos, vi. 1—7.; Micah, iii. 1—3.

† Jeremiah, xxxvii. 15., xxxviii. 5.

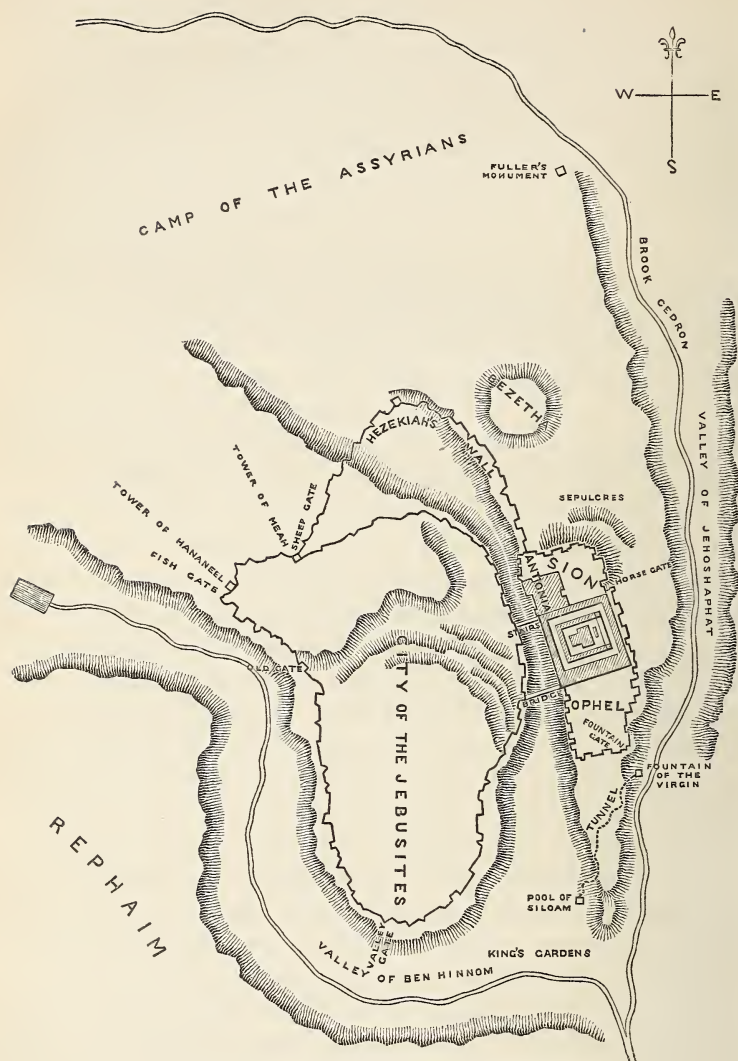
father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah, implies that Shebna's character and acts were of the unpaternal kind which we might infer from the previous censure on his pride and luxury, coupled with the like censures on his cotemporaries: — those senators and princes who joined house to house and field to field, while they ground the faces of the poor, and justified the wicked for reward; who called evil good, and put bitter for sweet; and were prudent in their own sight, but regarded not the work of the LORD, nor considered the operation of his hands.*

This prophecy, then, was delivered just before the fall of Shebna, and when the open country of Judah, and some of its fortified cities, were in possession of the Assyrians, and they daily expected under the walls of Jerusalem, which was crowded with fugitives from the country round.

If the latter half of verse 2. is to be taken with the former, which speaks of the city as still full of the bustle of peaceful life, it may imply that as yet they have seen no deaths, but of those who have died in their beds: if it is to be taken with verse 3., as a part of the picture of impending calamity, it may refer to deaths by famine, and by the pestilence which attacked the city crowded with fugitives from the open country, and of which Hezekiah himself had nearly died. Verse 3. describes the captivity of both princes and people, in the day in which the enemy would break down the walls, and the cries of the inhabitants reach to the mountains. There would have been some anticipation of these calamities, in the case of the cities of Judah already taken by the Assyrians, and the reports of which would have been known in Jerusalem: nay, Sennacherib's own account says, — 'Because Hezekiah still continued to refuse to pay me homage, I attacked and carried off the whole population, fixed and nomade, which dwelled around Jerusalem, with 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver, the accumulated wealth of the nobles of Hezekiah's court, and of their daughters, with the officers of his palace, men slaves and women slaves. I returned to Nineveh, and I accounted this spoil for the tribute he refused to pay me.†'

* See their description at length in Chap. v. and elsewhere.

† Rawlinson's *Outline*, p. 23. The passage is in continuation of that



SKETCH-MAP OF JERUSALEM.

Elam, as I have already said, includes the provinces of Media and Persia, at this time dependent on Assyria, and supplying Sennacherib with their famous bowmen. Kir *, as is now generally agreed, is the region between the Caucasus and the Caspian, which is marked by the names of the river Cyrus and the province Georgia: though it has been suggested that it may have been that tract of Southern Media where Ptolemy mentions Curene and Carina.

Verse 8. describes the alarm and indignation of Judah when, by the taking of her fortresses, and the appearance of an army under the walls of her capital, she is, both in the military and the moral sense of the word, dismantled. It was the grossest insult to tear the veil from the daughter of Zion; but now it was more than an insult, for it revealed to her the presence and the power of her oppressor.

Their eyes open to their danger, and they look to the arms in the arsenal, which took its name from having been built by Solomon of timber from Lebanon: they survey the walls of the citadel, commonly called the 'city of David,' and select houses to be pulled down for materials to repair the walls with: and they secure water for the inhabitants, and cut it off from the enemy, by stopping or concealing the sources of the springs which they have first conducted into reservoirs within the city.

In order to make these details clearer, let us examine them, with the help of the accompanying sketch-map. Towards the south-east part of that ridge of rugged, limestone, table-land, which, with a breadth of from twenty to twenty-five geographical miles, forms the back-bone of southern Palestine, there juts out a broad and elevated promontory, enclosed on the east, south, and south-west by deep ravines; while on the north and north-west it slopes more gently back into the main table-land. These ravines are the Valleys of Kidron and Ben-Hinnom, and the promontory is the site of Jerusalem.† The promontory itself consists of several lesser hills and undulations, of which the original, and even successive, levels must have been indefinitely

quoted above, p. 172. The version of Dr. Hincks reads 'his sons and daughters' instead of 'the officers of his palace.'

* 2 Kings, xvi. 9.; Amos, i. 5.

† Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, vol. i. p. 380 ff.

altered by the quarryings and abrasions, and the accumulations of earth and rubbish, of ages ; just as has been the case with the hills of Rome, or of London. And these hills in Jerusalem are still marked out by a main ravine, or depression, which crosses the whole city from north to south, and divides it into two unequal portions: and then by other lesser depressions, which run in the transverse direction, and again divide the western, which is the broader portion of the ground, into two hills commonly called Acra and Zion ; and the eastern into others named Bezetha, Moriah, and Ophel. I say commonly called Zion ; for all Christian and local traditions, from the time of Constantine to the present day, give this name to the south-western hill. But as no biblical or local knowledge has made it possible to reconcile this position of Zion with the various scriptural notices, Mr. Fergusson has returned to the uniform declaration of the Talmudical writers, that Zion was on the *north* side of the Temple ; and has shown that, by assigning this position to it, he can clear up all, or almost all, the hitherto inexplicable difficulties, and give us a thoroughly coherent topography of the Jerusalem of the Old (and also of the New) Testament.* Further local investigations, in the light of this view, and for the purpose of testing it, will no doubt ere long set the point at rest ; and such investigations are now actually in progress. I here assume Mr. Fergusson's to be the true, as it is the only intelligible, topography ; and with the help of his map (substantially followed in my sketch) point out the localities which would then correspond with the narrative before us. The city of Jerusalem, properly so called, was distinct from the city of Zion, or of David. The former was the old city of the Jebusites, and its site the western portion of ground which contains the hills of Acra and the falsely named Zion : the latter was a new city which David and Solomon built on the eastern side of the ravine, and which, when complete, included the citadel of David, on the northern brow of the true Zion, the Temple immediately to the south, and the Castle of Ophel to the south of that again. The citadel of David, or 'Strong-hold of Zion,' will thus have been in the same place in which, in successive

* *An Essay on the Ancient Topography of Jerusalem*, by James Fergusson, F.R.A.S. 1847.

periods, we find the citadel of the Maccabees and of the Romans, under the names of Bethzur and Antonia. It is to be supposed that the military considerations which approved the site in the last cases, would have done so in the first; and, if a civilian may hazard an opinion, it was on the north, and not on the south, that the main fortress was required, in order to protect the north-western side of the city, which was weak from the nature of the ground. Each of these cities, of Jerusalem and of Zion, would have its own wall; and their means of communication across the ravine which separated them, was apparently by 'the stairs that went down from the city of David,' as in after times by a bridge, of which there are still remains. These, then, are 'the Two Walls,' between which Hezekiah made a ditch or aqueduct; and by a gate between which Zedekiah fled, through the 'king's garden,' which was at the south end of the ravine. Before Hezekiah's preparations for the siege, the waters of 'the upper water-course of Gihon' (which is the water-head of Kidron, and not the Gihon of modern maps), and 'all the fountains without the city,' among which was perhaps that of Siloah, overflowed into and formed 'the brook which ran through the midst of the land,' down its natural channel of the Valley of Kidron; but now they were conducted, by extensive engineering operations, for which the Jewish nobles helped to provide the great number of workmen required, and the fame of which was known to later times*, 'straight down to the west side of the city of David,' that is, between the 'Two Walls.' There they seem to have been collected in a reservoir (made the easier in a ravine) which thus became a substitute for 'the old pool,' which lay without the fortifications; and then the king stopped, that is, buried in such a way as effectually to conceal, the fountains or sources themselves. The subterraneous channels of Siloah, already noticed, were probably among these works; probably too, before this diversion of its perennial sources, the 'brook Kidron' was itself perennial, instead of the mere winter torrent it is now. Hezekiah, lastly, seems to have built a wall across the northern opening of the ravine, where it widens into less

* "He [Hezekiah] fortified his city, and brought in water into the midst thereof: he digged the hard rock with iron, and made wells for waters."—Eccclus. xlviii. 17.

defensible ground; and which was perhaps rebuilt by Manasseh, and then described as 'a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley.' This was the weakest part of the whole ground, as I have before observed; and the name of the 'camp of the Assyrians,' still surviving in the time of Josephus, probably indicates that Rab-shakeh posted himself here: a tradition from Nebuchadnezzar's siege would have been more likely to give the name of 'Chaldeans;' but the fact that Titus encamped on the same spot, shows it was the proper place for besiegers in any age.

In the account which the Book of Chronicles gives of these same preparations for standing a siege, it is related that Hezekiah 'gathered the people together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and spake comfortably to them, saying, Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there be more with us than with him; with him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.' This was the right language for the king to use; and the response of the people was no doubt as sincere as loyal and enthusiastic: and their earnestness was deep enough to carry them through the impending crisis. But deeper than that it was not. Isaiah was at the very same time declaring that the people were looking to the approach of the enemy, and to the efficiency of their preparations for defence; but not to Him who had designed and done all this, both bringing the Assyrian on them to punish their sins, and protecting them from being quite destroyed by him: and though the prophet's preaching might seem not only more gloomy, but less true than the king's cheerful harangue, yet the event—the outward progress of national corruption and degeneracy without any real reformation—justified the former. He did not forget nor omit to assert, at the proper time, that the LORD had reserved to Himself a 'remnant:' it was his unceasing aim to confirm and increase that remnant by his exhortations and warnings: but he knew that the faith which his LORD required was not that facile enthusiasm which, alternating with panic, swayed for the time the assemblies in the 'street of the gate of the city.

Those critics who, for whatever reasons, see no necessity for assuming a literal accomplishment of the threats against Shebna, have hitherto been well content to accept, as its sufficient fulfilment, the change of offices found (as we have just noticed) in the Bible history of the time: but the mention in Sennacherib's Annals — quoted above — of 'officers of Hezekiah's palace' having been then carried to Nineveh, suggests the curious and interesting question, whether, after all, there may not have been some correspondence between the facts, and the rabbinical traditions that Shebna was carried off by Sennacherib. One of these traditions says that he was seized by Sennacherib when sent on an embassy by Hezekiah; and another, that he fled to the Assyrians after an unsuccessful conspiracy to deliver the city to them.

The vehement hyperbole of these threatenings against the people, if we now hesitate to add those against Shebna, reminds one of the language of Luther or of Burke: and when contrasted with the actual events, throws much light on the external and accidental characteristics of Hebrew prophecy. It is quite probable that the 'What hast thou here, and whom hast thou here,' was actually addressed to Shebna, face to face, and within sight of his new sepulchre: and if we follow the topographer quoted above, we shall believe that the Jewish forum, in which Isaiah was likely enough to have delivered the earlier part of this harangue, was in the city of Sion, and, therefore, close upon the city burying-grounds, which were just without the wall, and the more honourable sepulchres in which were actually hewn out in the north and east faces of Sion itself. The mention of the height of Shebna's new tomb, is supposed to indicate his extreme pretension to pomp and dignity, as the reader will see more at large in Lowth's note. The ancients, not excepting the Jews, attached much more importance than we do to every thing connected with the burial of the dead, because they were so much less able to distinguish the human person from the earthly body, or to apprehend the substantial reality of the former apart from the latter. Our burials symbolise, and express our faith in, immortality and a resurrection; but the Jews shared more or less the common feeling of antiquity, that there was some real connection between a man's due obsequies and

his state after death. Still their faith, though obscure, was in the main spiritual and elevating, when held as it was by David, Hezekiah, or Job. But the worldly and sense-bound man then, as, indeed, he does now, contemplated the costly preparations for his burial, and for the preservation of his embalmed and entombed body, as the last possible act of regard for that sensual existence which he alone cared for. It was but the consistent maintenance to the last of his sensual creed — ‘Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.’

On verse 23. I would suggest that it will be better English, if we read ‘glorious support’ instead of ‘glorious throne’ or ‘seat.’ It is a less liberty than that of rendering ‘a horn, the son of oil,’ by ‘a very fruitful hill;’* and, as in that case, it gives the real meaning without introducing a mixture of metaphors which our language cannot bear as the Hebrew can.

Some of the comments on verses 24. and 25. provoke our wonder how any one can have read through twenty-two chapters of Isaiah, and yet be puzzled by the transfer of the image of the nail from Eliakim in the former, to Shebna in the latter, verse; or can think that the difficulty is cleared up by taking the poetical picture of the honour which would redound to Eliakim’s whole family from his just and able administration, for a description of excessive nepotism, which should be at last punished by a fate like his predecessor’s.

Here, if not before, we shall get much light on Isaiah’s times, and the meaning of his discourses, by a comparison with the accounts of like national conditions in modern times, and especially those which thoughtful sufferers and actors during the last European war have given us. Niebuhr’s Letters, for instance: he illustrates Isaiah (while Isaiah interprets him, by revealing the law of the new, as well as of the old events) in his account of ‘that dull comfortable existence which was described as the golden age of thirty years ago;’ of ‘the aimless striving after something beyond’ which then arose, and ‘which, combined with the universal effeminacy, led to the miserable results’ which they all experienced as their subsequent condition: — of ‘the dissolution of all civil bonds and institutions being completed:’

* Isaiah, v. 1.

of 'nine-tenths of the landowners' (which in Germany includes the cultivators) 'both in town and country ruined, yet who must still go on paying contributions — it cannot be otherwise till they are cut down to the bone;' while 'many, many thousands of our youths, of our men, are shedding their blood, are pining away their lives in hospitals, or in want and wretchedness:— of 'an innocent country' (Holstein) 'abandoned to pillage, reduced to misery,' apparently to be 'deliberately turned into a desert by an unprincipled policy and rapacity,' and its prosperity 'fruitlessly destroyed, like some unhappy victim, whose fate it has been to experience only those sorrows which humiliate and enfeeble, and has no opportunity to make those sacrifices, by which individuals and nations are purified and exalted:— of 'life dragged along as a weary burden:— of 'armies entrusted to boys, because they are the sons of princes; divisions to generals who have outlived captivity,'— while the statesman 'who feels in himself that he could counsel and lead, remains in the back ground, not only because of a thousand miserable considerations, but because the hour of dissolution is not yet come, in which he would press forward:— of the error of fancying that 'the general misfortunes and the approaching danger have produced a grave and solemn tone at the Court and seat of government;— where 'all amusements go on just as usual: people look on the war as a subject of conversation, find fault with the English, abuse the Russians, comfort themselves with saying that the French are not so bad,' &c. &c. and 'there is an everlasting talk, mostly without the slightest comprehension of the matter,' among these courtiers and rulers, while men like Niebuhr must 'listen and not speak out their whole mind,' however 'their blood may boil with indignation:— of 'the senseless prating of those who talked of desperate resolves as of a tragedy:— of the 'untiring malice and inexhaustible wickedness' of the political intriguers, 'who have plunged this unhappy country into ruin,' while 'all true help is shamefully cast aside;— the utter 'blindness of the king which allowed the progress of political disunion' to proceed to such extremity; the 'lasting hindrance to all comprehensive undertakings arising from the mediocrity and baseness that can scarcely even now be dislodged from their present position of power;— and 'the vanity

of the idea that a better day *must* follow the night of incapacity and little-mindedness:’ — of the ‘bitter grief and comfortless affliction’ which prompts him ‘constantly to ask himself whether we are really living in the same age of the world that we did formerly, or whether all before us is not, as it seems to our eyes, chaos and night, a universal destruction of all that now exists.’ He feels, too deeply to be inclined to *say* much about it, that ‘the dreadful decision of a great judgment-day of the world is at hand:’ — ‘Now must begin either universal death and putrefaction, or the heavings of a new life: but where are its germs:’ — ‘this is the time when the elect are proved; he who has endured to the end, will have a bright evening to his life, but for the present, happy . . . are they who have learnt in other ways and former times to bear the cross:’ — he ‘begins to cherish the encouraging belief that many hearts have grown stronger and purer through danger and suffering, and that on all sides there lives a spirit, though straitened and repressed, whose power must increase:’ though it is so much ‘the most probable that they will have to endure the double sorrow of seeing this flame which has been secretly growing more intense, extinguished by oppression,’ that he can only ‘almost believe that if God would take pity on them, they might though with bitter grief and pain, attain to something much better than their former state,’ yet he urges his friend to ‘become the advocate among others of that which as yet scarcely begins to stir in the bosom of night, but of which the existence is certain: let them not regard what still exists on the surface of things, and is the tottering wreck of an age gone by:’ the patriot may see ‘the many elements of good striving for life, — of a better spirit than existed in happier time;’ the Christian may ‘trust that a Comforter will come, a new Light when he least expects it,’ and that ‘all the sorrow of this era will lead on towards truth if we are only willing.’ And when ‘deliverance is offered to them by the manifest and wonderful providence of God,’ who has ‘smitten’ the oppressor ‘with blindness;’ there is first the recognition that this deliverance has come ‘after God has chastened us sufficiently for our deep-rooted sins,’ and that unless it finds each of us ready to devote his life to its attainment, we cannot be saved;’ and then we have the picture of this re-

quisite moral and religious acceptance of their salvation, 'the ground cleared and ready to bear fruit,' 'love dwelling in every heart, and all ready to welcome whatever was noble and good,' and 'good will and good ideas ripening universally with good deeds:' and if the 'morality,' 'patience,' 'discipline,' 'humanity,' which makes us as well as Niebuhr 'feel a true reverence' for 'an army so pure,' were once and for the first time, 'during the whole war,' broken down by 'the great privations they had to suffer' after the battle of Laons, — the young officer who reports it 'could not sleep for grief;' the field-preachers took for their text, What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, and exhorted the men to return to the patience and honesty they had shown till lately; the brave fellows wept bitterly, and promised with a loud voice to do so; while General York reminded them of the sacredness of their vow that they ought to be as *good* as they were brave ordered one man to step forward from each company and took their hand upon it that they would suffer anything rather than be guilty 'of any excesses.' We may make such abatements as we think cool judgment demands from the glowing colours of the patriotic picture; its value as an illustration of Isaiah will not be diminished.

Zschokke thus moralizes on the French occupation of Switzerland:— 'There are times — the Divine Providence has so ordained it — there are times when it is needful that the iron rod of doom should be stretched forth to arouse the nations of the earth from their senseless brooding over material interests and sensual wants; and to save them from the gradual brutalization into which they are frozen by the influence of forms no longer vital; or from the degradation to mere mechanical motion and existence. National wanderings, crusades, and civil wars, have ultimately left behind them greater blessings than those which they destroyed. There must be times of death and destruction, to make room for new life. The devouring selfishness of the powerful would crush the weaker part of the human family, and cripple with its impious weapons the free wings of the soul, if from time to time the thunder-voice of a higher Will than man's did not proclaim, as of old, through the storm-

clouds of Sinai, the voice of Jehovah; "Thou shalt have none other gods than me!" Such were the thoughts that chiefly occupied me as I travelled with Tscharnier towards Aarau.*

* Zschokke's *Autobiography*, p. 71. English Translation. In Tholuck's preface to his Commentary on the Romans, (if I remember rightly) and in a paper of Krummacher's in the Reports of the Evangelical Alliance, there are like descriptions of the moral and religious effects of the war of freedom on the people and the king of Prussia.

CHAPTER XVII.

ISAIAH XXIII.: THE PHENICIANS — HISTORICAL NOTICES — THEIR TRADE — CARRIERS OF PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS — RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. — THE TYRIAN HERCULES — THEIR RELIGION POLITICAL, NOT NATURAL. — SIEGE OF THE ISLAND-TYRE BY SHALMANESER — BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR — BY ALEXANDER — PRESENT STATE. — AUTHORSHIP OF THE PROPHECY. — THE DISPENSER OF CROWNS. — THE QUEEN OF CITIES DISHONoured. — TYRE FORGOTTEN SEVENTY YEARS — SHALL SING AS AN HARLOT.

THE fertile and well watered plain which undulates from the foot of Lebanon to the sea, along the north-west coast of Palestine, was the land of the people called Sidonians by the Hebrews and by Homer, but Phenicians by the later Greeks and the Romans. Sidon (the Fishery) was the most ancient of their cities: the Book of Joshua calls it 'the great,' while it gives the epithet of 'strong' to Tyre, of which the tradition was, that it was founded 240 years before the building of Solomon's Temple, by fugitives from Sidon, then besieged by the king of Ascalon. Successive colonies filled the plain 'with great and fair cities,' from Tyre to Aradus, each of which seems to have had its own king, or judge, though in the time of David and thenceforward we find Tyre, and the king of Tyre, in apparent superiority over the whole people. They were a Canaanitish race; and their land — first promised to Zebulun — was allotted to Asher*, to whom, however, it remained (as Gesenius elsewhere says) an inheritance *in partibus infidelium*: for in the days of the Judges, the Sidonians not only continued to dwell 'careless, quiet, and secure,' but became the oppressors of the Israelites.† Lebanon supplied timber for the Sidonian ships, near Sarepta were iron and copper mines, the sea yielded them the shells and the sand with which

* Genesis, xlix. 13.

† Judges, xviii. 7, x. 12.

to make their purple dye and their glass, and their women wove the variegated robes of which Homer speaks: and thus they began that trade which in after times exchanged the tin of Britain, and the amber of Prussia, with the gold, the apes, the ebony, and the ivory of India, and of which Ezekiel has so gorgeously described all the details, as well as the wealth, luxury, and power of which it was the source.* By land their trade was conducted to a great extent (as we have before seen) by the Arab caravans; by sea, their own ships carried them to Egypt, Greece, Italy, Sicily, Malta, Carthage, Spain, and perhaps even to America; while the navy created by Solomon, with the help of their shipwrights and sailors, gave them a water communication with Arabia, and India, from the port of Elath at the head of the north-east gulf of the Red Sea.

The creation of this Hebrew navy was one of the fruits of the alliance and friendship of David and Solomon with Hiram, king of Tyre: he also supplied them with materials and artificers for building the Temple, palaces, and other public works; and the rapid growth of the national wealth and luxury of Israel from this period, shows that their commercial intercourse with Tyre must have been considerable.† Probably then, as in the times of Ezekiel, they supplied the Tyrian markets with wheat, honey, oil, and balm; and we may believe that a considerable part of the caravan traffic from Arabia would pass through their country, for the sake of the security afforded by a settled and civilised government. And thus, while Israel remained an agricultural country, as the whole scope of its constitution and policy required, it enjoyed as large a share of the benefits of commerce, as was compatible with the main historical ends for which the nation existed:—or, as Isaiah expresses it in the chapter before us, ‘The merchandise of Tyre was for them that dwelt before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.’ Nor was Phenicia’s debt to Israel less, or less characteristic: when a positive recognition of facts shall have superseded alike the opposite theories which—with superstitious reverence, or with scoffing sciolism—have conspired to exclude the Hebrew nation from its place in universal history, it will be

* Ezekiel, xxvii.

† 2 Samuel, v. 11.; 1 Kings, ix. 10—14. 26—28.; x. 11—29.

plain that it was not for nothing that Phenicia came in contact with a people whose institutions were based on a faith in family life, and in laws upheld by a righteous LORD; and that at the time when Jewish life was embodied by David and Solomon in the forms in which it would be most easily intelligible to foreigners, there should have been a Hiram capable of appreciating their personal and political character. It was after this that Phenicia became the carrier of the germs and maxims of politics and philosophy to Europe: and her people knew their calling too well not to get these, like other things, from the best market; though, like traders, they were content to hand them over to their customers, keeping little of them for themselves.*

We notice in Ezekiel's list, 'the persons of men,' brought from Javan (or Ionia), to the Tyrian market: and Isaiah's contemporaries, Amos and Joel, complain that the Tyrians sold Hebrew slaves, 'the sons of Judah and Jerusalem,' to the Edomites and the Greeks, notwithstanding the alliance and friendship which should have subsisted between the two nations†; of which slaves, as well as of the 'gold and silver, and precious goodly things' of the Israelites, they had possessed themselves by purchase from the Assyrian, or other licentious soldiery, who found in the Tyrians the shrewd and unprincipled traders who are always at hand to buy such plunder. To these complaints of the breaches of the 'brotherly covenant' and friendly alliance between the two nations, the prophets had in all ages to add their resistance to the opposite abuse of that friendship, which introduced the worship of the Sidonian Astarte and Baal into Israel, and of which Solomon's apostasy, and the establishment of the priesthood of Baal by Jezebel the wife of Ahab, and daughter of Ethbaal king of Tyre, were but instances, though the most important ones.

Melicartha, or Hercules — the Phenician and Greek equivalents, according to an inscription from Malta — was the god whose temple Herodotus went to Tyre to see, and found with its 'two pillars, one of gold and the other of emerald, both

* See Maurice's *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, § 'Phœnicians,' 1st and 2nd editions.

† Amos, i. 9, 10.; Joel, iii. 4, 5, 6.'

shining exceedingly at night,' and its rich offerings, which included (as we know from other accounts) those of the Phenician colonies, in all of which the same god was worshipped. Melicartha means 'king of the city,' and even Hercules is by some derived from a Hebrew word for 'the Trader;' and it is probable that he is the same as Baal, which was the general Phenician name for God.

Baal is constantly coupled with Astarte; and the more philosophical opinion * is that this national god and goddess were the Lord and Lady of Phenicia, rather than the sun and moon: — for to a people full of political life the sun and moon would have been themselves representatives, while a divine king and queen were the realities. And if so, the habitual inclination of the Israelites, an essentially political people, for this worship becomes the more easily understood. A worship of nature — of cats and dogs — like that of Egypt, could have had little attraction for them; but this of the Sidonians offered to supply their craving for a national and political creed, yet without the holiness and righteousness of heart and life, which the worship of the LORD of Abraham and of David required them to maintain by an habitual sacrifice of their sensual and worldly nature.

Of the colonies or commercial settlements of the Phenicians, the prophecy before us mentions two — Tarshish and Chittim. Tarshish, or Tartessus, was a city and port between the two mouths of the Bœtis, or Guadalquiver, in Spain, and the oldest of the Tyrian factories: and in this name, according to Gesenius, the later Phenician settlements of Gades and Carthage were afterwards included, both by the Hebrew and the classical writers. Chittim, as the same authority shows, is Cyprus, in the south of which island was the Phenician settlement of Citium, in the ruins of which, still called Chiti, Pococke found Phenician inscriptions; — but, as in the case of Tarshish, the name was extended, and in later times includes the other islands and coasts of the Mediterranean.

Sidon (for a full topography and history of which, as well as of Tyre, I must refer the reader to Dr. Robinson's *Biblical*

* Maurice's *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, 1st edition.

Researches in Palestine) is still a city of five or six thousand inhabitants, in the midst of well watered gardens and orchards — ‘the flowery Sidon dwelling by the streams of the graceful Bostrenus’* — with some trade in silk, cotton, and nutgalls. Of ‘Old Tyre,’ the site is uncertain, as there are no remains to mark it: the Island-Tyre seems to have been originally a ledge of rocks, which the gathering sand formed into a narrow island less than a mile long, and not half a mile from the main land: according to Josephus, it was already occupied by the Tyrians in the time of Hiram, the friend of Solomon. In the reign of Elulæus king of Tyre (cotemporary with Hezekiah) Cyprus rebelled; and Shalmaneser king of Assyria, who is said to have been called in by the city of Gath to protect it against Elulæus, invaded Phenicia; and on the submission of Sidon, Arce, Old Tyre, and other towns, obtained from them a fleet with which to attack the Island-Tyre. But the Tyrians made peace with Cyprus, defeated the Assyrians at sea, and successfully withstood a blockade of five years, in which, however, they suffered much from the cutting off of the aqueducts — of which the traveller still finds, if not the remains, which may be all later, yet the large and fine rushing streams, at the village named ‘Well-head.’ Colonel Rawlinson reports † the discovery of a notice of the capture of Tyre (I suppose Old Tyre) by Sargon: and a statue of the same king, with an inscription ‘suitable’ to the fact of his expedition to Cyprus, has been found in Cyprus, and is now in the Berlin museum. And Sennacherib, according to his annals, proceeded to Phenicia in his third year; when Luliya (Elulæus) king of Sidon, who ‘had thrown off the yoke of allegiance,’ fled at his approach, and was replaced by Tubaal, on whom was ‘imposed the regulated amount of tribute,’ after the whole country, including Tyre, had been reduced to submission. He then goes on to give a list of the kings who ‘repaired to his presence in the neighbourhood of the city of Husuva or Tyre, and brought him their accustomed tribute.‡ To this period, says Gesenius, is to be re-

* Dionysius Periegetes, O. T. D. 905. quoted by Robinson.

† Athenæum of Dec. 11. 1852.

‡ *Outline*, pp. 20. 23. Among the names are ‘Mittinti of Ashdod,’ ‘Bud-

ferred the founding of most of the colonies of Tyre, which consequently must now have been near its full vigour, notwithstanding these reverses. Under Ithobal II. Tyre was again besieged for thirteen years by Nebuchadnezzar, and apparently again proved impregnable.* The nation, however, seems to have been under the Babylonian, as afterwards under the Persian, yoke; and 'they of Tyre and Sidon' brought cedar from Lebanon to the port of Joppa, for rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem, in obedience to the grant of Cyrus.† A third siege of Tyre by Alexander the Great (about 332 B.C.), ended with the reduction of the Island-Tyre, after seven months of desperate struggle on both sides, during which Alexander built a mound or causeway from the main-land to the island. To supply materials for this, and the other works of the besiegers, Old Tyre was razed, never to be rebuilt; but 'the fortress of the sea,' and its trade, recovered both from this blow, and from that which the same conqueror gave them by building Alexandria. After Alexander's death it fell to the Seleucidæ, many of whose Tyrian coins, with Greek and Phenician inscriptions, are extant. In the time of Strabo, and under the Roman dominion, it was rich and flourishing, with its commerce and purple-dyeing trade; with two harbours (formed by Alexander's mole which had made the island a peninsula), of which however only one, called the Egyptian, was open; and with remarkably lofty houses, such as could not be seen in Rome itself. Tyre became Christian early ‡, and in the days of Jerome was still 'a very fair and noble city,' and traded 'with almost all the world.' It was an archbishopric under the patriarchate of Jerusalem, with fourteen bishoprics under it. Taken by the Saracens in 639; recovered by the Christians in 1124; in 1280, conquered

astor of Beth-Ammon, and '... of Huduma, or Edom.' Then follows the passage I have already quoted above, p. 171.

* I certainly think with Gesenius, that this is the fair conclusion to draw from Ezekiel, xxix. 18, 19. as well as from Jerome's admission that no Greek or Phenician history mentioned the capture. I have not, however, read Hengstenberg's Treatise; and Mr. Grote speaks of the insular Tyre being 'taken, or reduced to capitulate,' by Nebuchadnezzar, as an ascertained fact.

† Ezra, iii. 7.

‡ Acts, xxi. 4.

by the Mamelukes; and taken from them by the Turks, in 1516; it then sunk into a decay which corresponded literally with Ezekiel's denunciations, when, at the end of the seventeenth century, Maundrell found not one entire house, but only a few fishermen harbouring themselves in the vaults. Since then it has somewhat rallied, and Dr. Robinson found it a town of about 3000 inhabitants, with some poor trade in tobacco, cotton, and wood. Alexander's causeway has become a sand-bank half a mile wide; the ruins of the large cathedral are filled with mean hovels; and if anything remains of the Tyre of Isaiah, it is the columns of red and gray granite which strew the ragged western shore of the rock, 'from one end to the other, along the edge of the water and in the water.'

The dispute as to the genuineness of this prophecy offers a new feature, which is thus stated by Professor Alexander:—“The German writers of the new school are divided on this question. Eichhorn, Rosenmüller, Hitzig, and others, admit the reference to Nebuchadnezzar, but ascribe the prophecy of course to a contemporary writer. Gesenius, Maurer, Umbreit, and Knobel, admit its genuineness; but refer it to the siege by Shalmaneser. Hendewerk also admits the genuineness of the passage, but denies its having reference to any particular historical event. Ewald refers it to the siege by Shalmaneser; but infers from the inferiority of the style, that it may be the production of a younger cotemporary and disciple of Isaiah. The discussion of the subject by these writers is, in one respect, interesting and instructive. In most other cases they occupy common ground against the truth. But here they are reduced to a dilemma; and by choosing different horns of it, are placed in opposition to each other, clearly betraying in the conflict that ensues, the real value of their favourite style of criticism. Thus, while Ewald thinks the style unlike that of Isaiah, and Eichhorn and Hitzig see the clearest indications of a later age, Gesenius and Hendewerk are struck with the tokens of antiquity and with the characteristics of Isaiah. So, too, with respect to the literary merit of the passage: Hitzig treats it almost with contempt, while Hendewerk extols it as a masterpiece of eloquence. There could not be a stronger illustration of the fact already evident, that the boasted diagnosis of this school of critics is

always dependent on a foregone conclusion. Had there been no siege of Tyre in the days of Isaiah, Gesenius would easily have found abundant proofs that the chapter was of later date. But this not being necessary for his purpose here, he treats as inconclusive even stronger proofs than those which he himself employs in other cases."

This commentator then proceeds to argue in favour of the old orthodox explanation of the prophecy, as a prediction of the taking of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar. But I persuade myself that the reader has accompanied me thus far, with the understanding that we were not, any more than the rationalists just described, to adopt 'a foregone conclusion,' an *a-priori* theory, as to the nature of prophecy and its fulfilment, and cut our facts to fit it; but that we were to let the facts tell their own story, and be sure that whatever we could read of this would be God's truth, all commentators and critics notwithstanding. And if we have, on the one hand, found the book so replete with political, social, and personal wisdom, as to throw a clear light, not only on the history of Isaiah's own time, but on that of all other times and nations including our own — so that when we read of Babylon or Jerusalem, of Ahaz or Sennacherib, we perceive ourselves studying the universal propositions of a science by the help of a diagram: yet, on the other hand, we have found, mixed up with minute and interesting correspondences between details in the prophecies and in history, discrepancies and non-fulfilments of predictions at least as marked. Thus, in the last prophecy — the denunciation of Shebna and the worldly men of Jerusalem — Isaiah predicts that the city shall be taken by assault*, and both princes and people carried into captivity; and that in particular this shall be the fate of Shebna, in order to make way for his successor Eliakim: and if the accuracy of the reading of the Assyrian Inscription (quoted in the last chapter) is finally established, and we then claim a right to apply its terms to the fulfilment of the prediction as to Shebna and the nobles, it remains certain that, instead of the city being taken, Isaiah himself soon after promised, with a confidence which the event justified, that the Assyrian should not even attempt the siege. † In like manner Isaiah had predicted the approach of

* Isaiah, xxii. 3, 4, 5.

† Isaiah, xxxvii. 33, 34, 35.

the invaders from the north, when they should appear under the walls of Jerusalem*, whereas, in fact, they came from the south-west; though the other part of the prophecy, that they should then be cut off with a terrible crash, was fulfilled with striking accuracy. So the details as to the fate of Babylon,—the city taken during a feast by the Medes, cruel, regardless of gold, and riding two and two, with a cavalry of asses and camels as well as horses; and the Arab in our own day, still fearing the satyrs if he pitches his tent in its ruins for a single night,—appear by the side of the threat that ‘her time was near to come,’ and the fact that centuries intervened before its accomplishment even began.

What then? If we cannot prove that Isaiah was inspired, by showing that he could predict future events more infallibly than the ancient oracles, or the modern astrologers or mesmerists, was he not inspired? and are his writings not a part of God’s Revelation? Let the reader turn to the book itself; and though he may not find these infallible predictions—which he may be sure he would have found, if they had been essential to God’s communication of Himself to man—yet, he will find, reflected in each page, the light of that Holy Spirit, which in all ages has taught, and now teaches, the hearts of His faithful people, and so grants them to have a right judgment in all things, and to rejoice evermore in His holy comfort†; and he will find that, as the same light in his own heart brings him into sympathy and intelligence with the meaning of what is recorded in those pages, they do *reveal* to him something of God’s character and mind, and of His designs and dealings with man, which neither he, nor any one else, has known, except by their means. If the miraculous prediction were there, it would be but the sign: but we have the Inspiration and the Revelation themselves, superseding all signs.

If, then, we take the prophecy before us to be of the same kind as those which have preceded it, our historical remains are quite sufficient to bring Tyre into cotemporary connection with Isaiah, and quite sufficient to preserve that connection onward through successive ages, without our demanding any proof that

* Isaiah, x. 28—34.

† Collect for Whitsunday.

either Shalmaneser, or Nebuchadnezzar, did, or did not, take the city, and without being anxious for the confirmation of the reading of Sennacherib's account, much as it is to the purpose.

Isaiah sees the city and country of Tyre in the power of the enemy, and tells the fleets home-bound from the western colonies, that they will learn, when they are off Cyprus, that their own harbours and hearths are desolate. The inhabitants of the Island-Rock are silenced, by the ruin of its merchants who made Egypt its never failing granary — barren rock as it was — by making it a mart of nations. 'The Black' (Sihor) was the Greek and Latin, as well as the Hebrew, name for the Nile, with its fertilising black mud; and we notice Isaiah's wonted poetic taste in minute points, in calling the Egyptian harvest 'the harvest of the river,' and not of the earth. His next image is bold and grand enough: he calls the nation of sailors whose dwellings were their ships, and their chief city an island, 'the sea;' explaining (lest it should be too bold) that he means the 'stronghold of the sea.' It is doubted whether verse 5. means that when the tidings reach Egypt, the Egyptians will be grieved at the ruin of their great market; or, that the alarm in Phenicia, or among the nations generally, will be as great as when on some former occasion — whether the fall of No-Ammon lately, or even the destruction of Pharaoh at the Red Sea — the like news was heard of Egypt, famous to the world, and of which the prosperity was so important to the Tyrian commerce.

Herodotus and Strabo speak of kings in the smaller Phenician cities, as well as in the colonies of Tartessus, Citium, and Carthage; and we Englishmen need not go to Genoa or Venice, with their doges and senates, their kings of Corsica and Greek dependencies, for examples of a nation of merchants who are princes and dispensers of crowns: — we need only look at the 'Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies,' extending their rule over a great continent, and there setting up and pulling down kings and emperors at their will. Tyre (like other nations) was noted for the severity with which she ruled her dependencies; but now their bonds are loosed, and the prophet tells Tarshish, which, with its natives working as slaves in the Spanish silver mines, may have been the hardest treated of all, that she is free as the Nile, the river that least regards any

bounds, to wander at her own sweet will.* And the proud queen of cities herself, she who so long sat in glory, rejoicing in her wealth and power, and in that antiquity of which the Phenicians were so proud, shall fly, a dishonoured woman, and on foot, for refuge to her colonies — to Tarshish or to Chittim — but even there shall find no rest. For the enemy may pursue her, and the colony may retaliate for its past wrongs, of which, in fact, we see an instance at the date of this prophecy, when Cyprus and the cities of Phenicia assisted Shalmaneser in the siege of Tyre, as has been mentioned above.

The word translated ‘merchant’ in verses 8 and 11, is ‘Canaan’ in the Hebrew, which Gesenius illustrates by the like use of *Chaldean* for Astrologer; and of Jew, Swiss, Savoyard, and Italian, to indicate various modern callings: at the same time he observes that it is not unlikely that the name Canaan may, according to its etymology, mean the land, or people, of traders.

It is the LORD of hosts, whose counsels bring this ruin upon Tyre; and His instruments are the Chaldeans, at this time vassals and auxiliaries of the Assyrians, and whose modern establishment at Babylon is contrasted with the antiquity of the nation they destroy. The Chaldeans may, or may not have been specially employed by Shalmaneser or Sennacherib in the siege of Tyre; they no doubt served in his armies, as the tribes of Elam and Media did. As I have already noticed this mention of the Chaldeans, when considering chapter xiii., I will here only point out, that it is exactly analogous to that of Elam and Kir in the last chapter; and that there is no more necessity in the one case, than in the other, for supposing that the prophet’s phraseology must, if taken without prejudice, indicate the nation chiefly interested in the war, and not a dependent people who were serving as auxiliaries.

Tyre shall be forgotten ‘seventy years, according to the days of a king;’ — a Hebrew idiom, obscure to us, though probably plain enough to Isaiah’s hearers; but of which the most probable sense is, that the round number here, as elsewhere, indicates an indefinite, though considerable time, and that the prophet farther limits this by a phrase equivalent to ‘for about a whole

* “The river wandering at its own sweet will.” — WORDSWORTH.

generation.' 'The days of a king,' the representative of a nation, seems fitter to express 'for a generation' than 'the days of a man' would have been: and we may compare the phrase with 'the days of a hireling,' in chapters xvi. 14., xxi. 16.; 'as the years of a hireling mean years computed strictly, so the days of a king may mean days computed freely.' At the end of this time, the LORD will visit Tyre: the old alliance, 'the brotherly covenant,' shall be renewed with Israel, and Tyre shall share with the other nations of the earth the blessings which Isaiah promises to them all in turn, when they shall have come, through sufferings, to the knowledge of the God of Israel. Then Israel will have a part in the worldly prosperity of Tyre, as Tyre in her spiritual. This restoration of Tyre is foretold by a strange though expressive image:—at the end of seventy years Tyre shall again play the harlot with all the nations of the earth: and her gains shall be holiness to the LORD. The harlot * converts into a matter of traffic what should be a sacred relationship: so trade brings men together merely as buyer and seller, not as brethren; and consequently rapidly degenerates from self-interest into selfishness, unless it be perpetually counter-balanced by other and nobler aims in the man. The Hebrew lawgivers and prophets saw that, in their times, and for their nation, such counterpoises could not be made effectual, and therefore discouraged commerce itself: and the contemptuous image of the harlot implies this feeling here, though we have at the same time the recognition that trade is not essentially evil in the declaration that its gains shall be dedicated to the LORD. The Mosaic law which expressly forbid the offering to the LORD the gains of a harlot, may tell us that Isaiah has here laid aside his illustration, as poets and orators do, as soon as the momentary purpose is served, though to the perplexity of their prosaic commentators. The explanation that verse 16. is not Isaiah's address to Tyre, but an extract from some popular song of the day called 'the harlot's song,' is preferred by the modern translators.

* Harlot is 'hire-lot,' and originally synonymous with 'hireling.' Chaucer says of the 'Sompnour,' or servant of the ecclesiastical court,

"He was a gentle harlot, and a kind."

CHAPTER XVIII.

UTTER DESOLATION OF JUDAH —ACTUALLY CAUSED BY THE ASSYRIAN ARMIES.
 —NATIONAL COVENANT, BROKEN BY AHAB — HE SHUTS THE TEMPLE. —
 GOD'S COUNSELS OF OLD.—MOAB PUT FOR ASSYRIA.—PATIENCE IN NATIONAL
 CALAMITIES. — THE WIFE DIVORCED, AND TAKEN BACK. — THE SILVER
 TRUMPET SOUNDED. — EXPANSION OF ISAIAH'S VIEWS.

ISAIAH xxiv. to xxvii.: — It is agreed that these chapters form a continuous discourse. The older controversy as to its subject, has naturally produced the modern one — in which the rationalists differ among themselves as well as from the orthodox — as to its date and author. A clear summary of these, with references to the writers in whom they can be studied at large, is given by Professor Alexander: to this, and to his admirable and conclusive judgment, that the higher criticism, as to the style and authorship, has here proved itself to be arbitrary and worthless; while the endless diversity of opinions, as to the subject of the prophecy, show that it is generic, and not to be restricted to one particular event; I refer the reader.

Let us, then, return to the simple method, which has hitherto reconciled the essential parts of all the various views, instead of compelling us to choose one to the exclusion of the rest; and here, as before, take the text as it stands, and consider that Isaiah is, as usual, setting forth — forth-telling rather than foretelling — universal laws, with a special (and to us chiefly illustrative) application to his own times.

The contents agree well with the date, which is indicated by the place of the prophecy in the book: — namely, about the time that Sennacherib was besieging Lachish or Libnah, and after the fall of Ashdod. Ashdod was about thirty miles from Jerusalem; and Samaria, which fell into the power of the Assyrians, and became available as one of their military posts and bases of operation, in the sixth year of Hezekiah, was nearly

the same distance. And as Lachish and Libnah were nearer than either, we have only to remember the extent of ground that a large army covers, and the way in which even modern Christian armies, and much more those of ancient barbarians, sweep, and always used to sweep, whole countries with 'the besom of destruction,' to understand that Isaiah's picture of what he and his fellow-citizens were seeing around them, and daily expecting, is no exaggeration of reality. Facts, at such times, go beyond the strongest imagination. And we shall have a more accurate conception of the state of things, if we remember that this last invasion of Sennacherib came upon a people already exhausted by the repeated calamities which, from the end of the reign of Jotham, had fallen on them from every quarter. We may here look back with advantage to chapter i., which, whatever its date, describes precisely the condition of Judea and Jerusalem, about the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign.

The Hebrew employs the same word for 'earth' and 'land,' and our own translators, like others, approach this poetic indefiniteness, by giving sometimes one, and sometimes the other. I might repeat a like remark as to the interchange of the future and preterite tenses; but hope the reader, even if unacquainted with the original, has already sufficiently realised this characteristic, to find it a help rather than a hindrance to his enjoyment and appreciation of the Hebrew seers.

The LORD is come to judge his people. Ahaz shut up the Temple, and altogether changed the national worship for idolatry: and though this public and open 'transgression of the laws, change of the ordinance, and breach of the covenant' with the LORD of the nation, was publicly atoned for by Hezekiah, yet there was but too much evidence that the greater part of the people were still, as to heart and faith, better represented by Ahaz than by his pious son and successor: and therefore the LORD was 'turning upside down' the whole country—man and beast, cultivated fields and walled cities, political order and social relations—emptying out and scattering its contents, as if it were a bottle, or other vessel. The prophet sees Jerusalem in confusion, taken by assault, and the people in voluntary exile or captivity.

But from the beginning it was a part of his office to preach that 'a remnant should return,' and (whether alluding or not to any passing event we cannot now say) he sees this remnant, brought through suffering to the knowledge of their LORD, and raising songs of praise to Him in the various lands in which they are scattered. Their lot seems to him even better than his own and that of his countrymen at home; for at home the spoiler and the 'treacherous dealer' are upon them, they are hunted from one refuge to another, and the windows of heaven are opened as in the days of Noah, and the foundations of the earth shaken as with a universal earthquake:—

Broken, all broken is the earth;
 Shattered, all shattered is the earth;
 The earth doth quake, doth quake exceedingly;
 The earth doth reel, doth reel, like a drunken man,
 And swayeth to and fro like a hammock.

Such is the more literal rendering; the verbs (as in verse 3.) are repeated in the intensive form, in the Hebrew; and I do not see that its wild force is not admissible into an English version. The hammock (the same word as in chap. i. 8.) is still used throughout the East by the night-watchers of vineyards.

In that day the LORD will come to judge both the haughty and worldly nobles of Judah, and also the still more haughty and worldly kings of the earth, who have been the instruments of His righteous judgments: they shall be visited first with punishment, and afterwards with pardon, while the LORD of hosts shall establish His kingdom in Zion, and call His servants—the Hezekiahs, Eliakims, Isaiahs, and the body of faithful and holy men, in that as in every other age—to be His senators, His council and fellow-workers in His glorious reign.

The prophet speaks, or writes, in the actual, and apparently increasing, desolation of his own country: but he has such clear and bright views of God's counsels and plans from the beginning, and of the wonderful way in which He works them out in faithful conformity to His original design, that they present themselves to his illumined eye as already accomplished: and while he sees the LORD reigning gloriously in Jerusalem on the one hand, on the other he contemplates the defenced cities of the

terrible nations — Babylon or Nineveh, and the whole polity of arbitrary godless power, which they represent — reduced to a heap of ruins; and the furious rage of those nations which was now breaking upon Judea like a hurricane, he sees brought down as quietly and as completely as the burning heat of an Eastern sun is subdued by the shadow of a cloud. And thus passing from images of violence to those of gentleness, he contemplates the day when all the nations and peoples over whom the dark covering of that heathen tyranny is now spread, shall come up to keep the feast at Jerusalem, in fellowship with Israel, and shall there rejoice with them in worshipping the LORD and receiving His laws. The Assyrians themselves do not seem to be included here, or in any part of these chapters, among the nations to be thus blessed; unless it be in verse 22. of chapter xxiv., and there it is doubtful if such be the meaning. The faith that even Assyria was eventually to become a part with Israel of the inheritance of the Lord, is unequivocally expressed in chapter xix.: but we cannot wonder that Isaiah should have ordinarily spoken of this cruel tyranny as merely evil and obnoxious to entire destruction: nay, we may say, that—considering the unavoidable limitations which control human thought and language—less extreme denunciations would not have declared, in the way which the circumstances of Isaiah and his countrymen needed, that the LORD was the righteous and unsparing judge of all selfish, godless, tyranny and rapacity.

I have already noticed the idiom by which, in all probability, Moab, in xxv. 10., is put for Assyria, as Babylon in the Book of Revelation means Rome. Isaiah's exuberance of imagination, and love of concreteness — elsewhere exhibited by such names as 'The desert of the sea,' 'The valley of vision,' 'Ariel the city where David dwelt,' — may sufficiently account for the usage: but it is worth while to consider that in times of strong and deep religious enthusiasm, such as our Civil War, or the days of Wesley and Whitfield, when men would be more than usually apt to choose the most expressive, instead of merely traditional phrases, these concrete symbols become especial favourites. The 'fortress' in verse 12., and the 'lofty city' of verse 5. in the next chapter, are plainly the same as the 'palace of strangers,' and 'city of the terrible nations,' above. With

these, and their fall, Isaiah now contrasts the strong city in the land of Judah, which has the salvation of Jehovah for its walls and bulwarks. And he puts into the mouth of the people of Judah, a song, such as they were accustomed to sing, as they went up from their houses to the temple, in festive procession, to worship. It was not very long since Hezekiah had opened the gates of the temple, shut by the profane Ahaz, and had renewed the public worship of the LORD with burnt offerings accompanied by 'the song of the LORD,' and with trumpets and the instruments of David*: but on less grave occasions than their return from national apostasy, the opening of the gates of the temple to receive the procession of worshippers seems to have been a solemn ceremonial†; and here Isaiah represents the temple receiving the redeemed and righteous nation, which by keeping to its faith and trust in the LORD, has obtained peace of heart instead of the miserable state of anxiety, and national deliverance instead of the foreign oppression, described in chapter xxiv. The Temple, and Jerusalem itself, stand on a rock; but their true foundation is the Rock of Ages, Jehovah Himself. The image of the tyrant city brought to the dust, and trodden by the feet of the poor, suggests the thought of the path in which those feet had previously been walking. It led through the midst of God's judgments, through a land 'devoured by the curse;' but they waited patiently, and found that God was leading them all the way, and making the path level and straight before them as they went. The 'waiting' suggests a new image: during the long night of Assyrian oppression, their soul had longed for rest, or for the morning to close a night in which no rest was possible; and with the first dawn of deliverance, their spirit would spring forth to new activity, desirous to practise the righteousness it had learnt through affliction. But there are some so reprobate that neither correction nor mercy will teach them righteousness: even in the restored and holy nation they will continue their evil doings, their selfishness and their oppression of the poor, and will refuse to recognise the invisible King and His laws: and therefore the zeal of the LORD in the restoration of His true people shall

* Chron. xxix. 3. 27—30.

† Psalm, xxiv. 6, 7. 9., cxviii. 19.

prove a consuming fire to destroy these His enemies. Verse 12. corresponds with our prayer, 'Give peace in our time, O Lord, for there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God : ' other lords have had dominion over the nation, because it has chosen other gods ; but henceforth Judah will worship no God but the LORD, and He will again be both God and King to her, while those other kings and gods are become dead men and spectres, never to rise to life and power again. The word translated 'deceased' in verse 14, and 'dead' at the end of verse 19*, is 'rephaim,' and means both 'giants' and 'silent ones ;' so that it expresses a notion something like that of our word 'spectres : ' this word, and other parts of the imagery, indicate a connection between these verses, and the 21st ; and there will not be much difficulty in following this connection, if we remember that it is an under-current of poetical imagination, and not a series of dry syllogisms ; and that, as is usual with Isaiah, there is a certain alternation of ideas, which makes the light and dark, the present and the future, of the vision, rise and fall like the waves of the sea. Thus, no sooner has the thought of the destroyed heathens suggested that of the increased numbers and prosperity of Israel, than the prophet is reminded that, instead of their being able to rejoice in any such increase, they are like women who have *not* brought forth children, and whose prayers† and pains are without result : but immediately his confidence revives : — Judah's dead, and shades of the dead, the dwellers in the grave and the unseen world, are not like Assyria's dead ; for a dew, such as makes the grass grow, is fallen upon them, and they shall 'awake and sing,' — Judah shall not merely bring forth more children in the place of those she has lost, but the very earth shall give birth to those already dead. Yet the present is a time of affliction : — Yes,

* As in chap. xiv. 9.

† A *whispered* prayer : "beautifully expressive," says Alexander, "of submissive, humble prayer, like that of Hannah when 'she spake in her heart and only her lips moved but her voice was not heard,' although, as she said herself, 'she poured out her soul before God,' which is the exact sense of יִפְתָּח in this place. A like expression is applied to prayer in the title of Psalm cii." The whole description of Hannah, 1 Samuel i., is most apposite.

but only for 'a little moment;' and the LORD's people have only to wait patiently, and they will see Him come to deliver them, and to punish all evil-doers; and then the earth will disclose and give up her slain for another purpose — that they may rise in the judgment against the tyrants of whose guilt there seemed no evidence. The 'song' which began in verse 1. is usually considered to end with verse 19., while verse 20. declares, in the LORD's name, that it is only necessary to wait a short time for 'that day' in which the song may be fitly sung: but I have some doubt whether these precise, classic-like, demarcations, are not as foreign to the Hebrew and prophetic genius as they are difficult to determine without arbitrary changes of the literal sense of the text. The 'entering into the chambers' may, not improbably, allude to the command that the children of Israel should not go out during the night of the destruction of the first-born of Egypt: and if we do not, with Grotius, suppose another allusion to Hezekiah's shutting himself within the walls of Jerusalem, till Sennacherib's army was cut off, the correspondence of the two may perhaps be attributed to the influence which a poet's imagination must always feel from the important events about him at the time. The idea of the LORD, the king, leaving His royal residence, visiting the places where crime has been committed, and judging and executing sentence on the criminal, we have had before.

Leviathan, which in Job means the crocodile, here stands for a great sea-serpent or dragon, and thus represents the Assyrian power. As regards the various controversies on verses 3, 4, 5. of this (27th) chapter, it is enough for me to refer to what I have said above and elsewhere, as to the attempts at classical demarcations; and to observe that the briars and thorns seem to be the evil part of the Jewish nation, which needed to be cleared out of the vineyard, rather than the foreign power which was made the instrument of that clearance. The 'taking hold of my strength' is best explained by the double image of taking refuge in a fortress, and at the horns of the altar. The idea in verse 8. is by Ewald and Alexander explained to be that of the LORD inflicting on His faithless bride the moderate punishment of a divorce, for which 'contending' and 'sending away' are the legal phrases: — the latter commentator adds that the

temporariness of the punishment is indicated by 'the day of the east wind,' as though (I suppose) the duration was limited by the time of the storm. The result of this punishment shall be that the images, or the groves, of Baal and Astarte shall be thrown down, and their altars broken up, and the fragments scattered about like the chalkstones which (as Strabo mentions) were familiar objects on the ground near Jerusalem. But the heathen enemies of Israel are incapable of reformation, because they are 'a people of no understanding:' and therefore the prophet foretells their utter destruction: he transfers to them the image of the vineyard, and pictures it as the prey of the weakest destroyers (compare 'feet of the needy' above): — the calf shall browse on the green vines, and when they are withered, the women shall gather them for firewood. In that day the LORD will gather (literally 'beat,' or 'thresh,' as the manner was) the fruit of His oliveyards, and gather the remnant of His own people from the north to the south, collecting them with such care — literally 'one to one,' — that not one shall be lost. The great silver trumpet, the blast of which, from the days of Moses in the wilderness, had gathered the princes to council, mustered the hosts in the camp, or called the LORD and His people to remember the national covenant 'in the day of their gladness, in their solemn days, and over the sacrifices of their burnt offerings and their peace offerings,'* shall be heard in that day of the LORD, —

And they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria,
 And the outcasts in the land of Egypt,
 And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

It would be no less silly than dishonest to pretend that these chapters are by Isaiah, if there were evidence to the contrary: and if their genuineness were merely doubtful, we must abstain from drawing from them any of those historical or biographical conclusions which authentic documents might supply as to the times and character of the writer. But in as far as I may venture to form an opinion, I must say, that the sceptical

* Numbers, x. 1—10.; Jeremiah iv. 5.; Joel, ii. 1, 15.

criticism has not, as to these chapters, even an appearance of more than ingenious trifling; the arguments founded on asserted peculiarities of style and diction in the original, are, as usual, met by counter-arguments, or positive denials of the facts, on the part of the orthodox scholars, as well as of the non-orthodox Rosenmüller: my own views on the possibility of proving anything by such arguments I have already stated. And therefore, since Isaiah's name is on all the old, genuine title-pages, and only omitted in the modern, spurious ones, let the reader keep, like me, within the limits of ordinary, matter-of-fact, common-sense, English criticism, and then he will see something better worth his notice than whole continents of cloud-land. This is, the fact, that while we recognise, throughout these chapters, the old familiar features—the accustomed political faith and poetic genius—of Isaiah, we see how ‘the years that bring the philosophic mind,’ and still more the sufferings, personal and national, which are God's opportunity for developing the spiritual life, were now telling upon the prophet. The tone is more subdued, and gentler; the evangelical temper shows itself increasingly through the patriotic; political events are more subordinate to the universal life of things; and the national faith in the LORD of Judah and the Jew, is brought into more intimate dependence on the deeper trust in Him as the LORD of the Church and of the spirit of man.

That a like religious temper of mind might be properly attributed to an imaginary prophet, living in Babylon during the exile, or in Jerusalem in the time of Cambyses, I allow: but historical fact, and coherent romance, are not the same thing.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE POLITICAL, MORAL, AND RELIGIOUS STATE AND PROSPECTS OF JUDAH.—
 ARIEL, THE LION OF GOD.—WORLDLY STATE-CRAFT.—TRUE INSIGHT.—
 THE EMBASSY TO EGYPT.—PERSECUTION OF THE PROPHETS.—DUMB IDOLS
 AND THE UNSEEN TEACHER.—THE HOLY SOLEMNITIES.—TALMUDICAL AC-
 COUNT OF FESTIVE PROCESSIONS.—THE STROKE OF DOOM ON SENNACHERIB.
 —THE REAL DELIVERER.—SOCIAL INFLUENCE OF WOMEN.—THE SIEGE
 RAISED.—EDOM PUT FOR ASSYRIA.—RETURN OF THE RANSOMED CAPTIVES.

ISAIAH xxviii. to xxxv.—The correspondence of thoughts and images, and the unity of subject and sentiment, mark these eight chapters as successive paragraphs or sections of one prophecy; and the whole contents accord with the date indicated by their place in the book. The reader will give the advocates of other views such a hearing as he thinks fitting.

Chapter xxviii. The travellers' descriptions of the beauty of the hill and valley of Samaria, have probably strengthened the temptation of modern commentators to adhere to the literal explanation of the phrase 'drunkards of Ephraim,' in spite of the difficulty it involves as to the date of the prophecy. This difficulty is then best got over in the way I have pointed out as to chapter xvii.; but the phrase is exactly analogous to 'men of Sodom,' in chapter i., as well as to the ordinary language of all the Hebrew writers, and may be taken without any violence to mean the leading men of Jerusalem, to whom all the rest of the chapter relates. Isaiah fuses into one image, the heads of the nation, crowned with flowers at their habitual debauches, and the capital cities — Samaria and Jerusalem — each reposing in its fertile valley, and crowned with a chaplet of towers intertwined with vines and olives: the flowers are of themselves fading, and the LORD will follow up on Judah the punishment He has already inflicted upon Ephraim, by casting their revellers' crowns to the ground with a strong hand, and trampling them under foot: — employing as his instrument the overwhelming

flood of Assyrian invasion. Yet this wrath is but the means of love: its purpose is that the LORD Himself may become the crown of glory and the diadem of beauty to all those who — not being utterly corrupt — shall remain from this purification of the land. In that day He will be wisdom to the judge, and in His strength the soldier shall turn back the tide of battle to the enemy's gate.*

But at present not only are these — the hereditary nobles and heads of tribes, and the elected or appointed judges — wanting alike in military ability, and in judicial uprightness, but the priests (including the Levites) and the prophets — the ministers of national worship, and the teachers and controllers of education of the whole people — are equally 'gone out of the way through strong drink.' Drunkenness was no doubt literally the habitual vice of the higher orders in Isaiah's time; and then, as in all times, it was the symbol of every kind of debased subjection of the human, to the animal, nature. Such nobles could not govern; such judges could not administer, nor such priests expound, the law; nor was any 'vision' possible to prophets in whom the eye of reason and of faith was thus obscured. Lowth's explanation, that verses 9. and 10. are a scoffing speech of the drunken prophets, is usually preferred: but I have some doubt, as I have before said, whether these dramatic speeches are not often inventions of the commentators; and the sense is as clear, if we understand Isaiah to ask how it is possible in this general debasement to find any one capable of learning true wisdom, and then to add (in the tone of remonstrance adopted in the epistle to the Hebrews), that though the nation was no longer in its infancy, and ought to be capable of manly knowledge, yet it did in fact require to be instructed again in the very rudiments, and to have these impressed on it by perpetual repetition. And then — whether the thought is suggested by that of drunken and scoffing stutterers, or of children unapt to learn — he tells them that the LORD will send them a teacher who shall speak to them with the barbarous Assyrian tongue: they will then hear words very different from those which they now despise, because they proclaim, 'This is the rest; cause the weary to rest;' and

* 2 Sam. xi. 23.; 2 Kings, xviii. 8.

they will then find these repeated warnings become their condemnation, because they will have deprived them of all excuse.

He anticipates the answer of 'the scornful men that rule this people in Jerusalem;' for has he not heard it often enough, year after year? It was their policy which in the time of Ahaz had delivered Judah from her imminent danger by bringing Tiglath-Pileser upon Syria and Ephraim: and if it was at the sacrifice of Judah's independence, and at the price of much tribute, to say nothing of the destruction of the sister-people of their own race, yet these evils were nothing in comparison of the advantages; for they touched them—the rich nobles in Jerusalem—but little, seeing they had the land and the remaining wealth of the country accumulated in their hands, and could, by suitable perversion of the law, wring out from the poor enough means of luxury to last their time, whatever might happen afterwards. Besides, they had not only secured themselves by a treaty with that personification of death and hell, the Assyrian, but they had outwitted him,—for what chance could a mere barbarian soldier have against the deep-laid policy of an old, long-civilised state? they were in communication with Egypt and Ethiopia, and at the proper time, they would bring the armies of Tirhakeh to free them from the power of Sennacherib. And to this the prophet replies, that when the storm does sweep over the land, as it assuredly will, these 'refuges of lies' will prove no shelter to their builders; they have been tried by the plummet of honesty and righteousness, and found to be so out of line that they must come down: but meanwhile, nay from of old, the LORD has Himself founded a really serviceable house for His people—namely, the ancient constitution and polity of which He himself is the chief corner-stone; and the man who trusts in that foundation, believing that it really is there, will not be urged to any impatient acts of panic, whatever may be the apparent danger. The reader will remember the descriptions of the enormous corner-stones in ancient Jewish buildings: and will compare our LORD's parable of the house founded on the rock. There is a doubt whether the last clause in verse 19. can be fairly translated 'Only to hear the report shall be a distress;' and whether it is not better to read,

‘And affliction alone will make you understand doctrine,’ alluding to verse 9., where the last two words of the original are the same.

The LORD will break forth upon his own people, as he did in old times upon the heathen Philistines* : it is a ‘strange work’ thus to afflict and destroy the people of His love, as though they were heathens : but He has determined to do it,—to execute justice to the uttermost ; therefore let the mockers take heed that they do not make this determination more stringent upon themselves, by persevering in their evil way. Then the prophet propounds a parable : the husbandman has a place, and a time, for each successive operation of his husbandry ; he now ploughs, now harrows, sowing one seed broad-cast, and another in rows ; beats out the corn with the heavy threshing-wain, and the light aniseed (perhaps used then, as now in Italy, to flavour the bread as well as to make spirit) with a rod ; and, finally, ceases from all these operations when all are completed, and the corn is ready to be ground (or actually ground) for bread. All these processes — in which we notice that the harsh ones of breaking up both the land and the grain predominate — are taught the husbandman by God ; and their order and skilful arrangement are the reflection of His wisdom and plans. Isaiah leaves it to his hearers to apply the parable to their own case, and so to understand how the LORD is regulating all His dealings with the nation, to the end that He too may gather the wheat into His garner at last.

Chapter xxix. The simplest meaning of ‘Ariel’ is ‘lion of God ;’ but it also signifies ‘hearth of God’ when derived from another root. In the former sense it comes to mean ‘a hero,’ as in 2 Sam. xxiii. 20.; Isaiah xxxiii. 7.; and in the latter it occurs in Ezekiel xliii. 15, 16., for the brazen hearth of the great altar of burnt offerings, thence commonly called ‘the brazen,’ though the rest of it was of stone. There is no doubt that Jerusalem is pointed out by this enigmatical name ; and the immediate context, as well as the expression in chapter xxxi. 9. — ‘the LORD whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem,’ — make it probable that Isaiah intended to involve both meanings

* 2 Sam v. 18—25.; 1 Chron. xiv. 9—16.

in the word, as though he had said, ‘Woe to the city of heroes, woe to the city of sacrifices: it shall now be put to the test what God and what man think as to both.’

David, that lion of God, had first encamped against Jerusalem, and then made it the abode of his royal house, and the capital of his kingdom; so that it became itself an Ariel, a lion of God, in the land:—

Judah is a lion’s whelp:
 From the prey, my son, thou art gone up:
 He stooped down, he couched as a lion,
 And as an old lion: who shall rouse him up?
 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
 Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
 Until Shiloh come;
 And unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

And after the vicissitudes of 300 years, and in the midst of present dangers, the people of Jerusalem were still confident in the strength of their ‘lion of God,’ and year by year came up to the public festivals to lay their accustomed offerings on the ‘altar of God;’ though with little remembrance that it was not in the altar and the city, but in the LORD Himself, that David put trust, and found his strength. Therefore the LORD will bring Ariel low; the proud roar of the lion shall be changed for the weak, stridulous voice, which the art of the ventriloquising necromancer brings out of the ground; and the enemies of the LORD shall be sacrificed and consumed on the hearth of His altar. First, His spiritual enemies among the Jews themselves, but afterwards the heathen oppressors of His people; and the lion shall recover his God-derived strength; and thus both in adversity and in success, ‘it shall be unto me as Ariel.’—“He who threatens your destruction shall vanish like a dream, *‘par levibus ventis voluerique simillima somno:’* he who threatens your destruction shall awake as from a dream, and find himself cheated of his expectations; for—as Grotius beautifully says—*spes sunt vigilantium somnia.*”*

* Alexander on the verse: he also quotes from Barnes a passage in one of Mungo Park’s Journals:—“No sooner had I shut my eyes than fancy would convey me to the streams and rivers of my native land. There as I

The inhabitants of the now self-satisfied city draw themselves back in incredulous and contemptuous wonder on hearing Isaiah's warnings: and therefore he tells them, that they, their rulers, and their teachers, are so besotted — not with the transient effects of wine, but with the abiding pressure of sin, — that they can comprehend nothing of God's methods and purposes. Where no vision — no insight into the divine government of the world — is, the people perisheth; and such is the present condition of Jerusalem and Judah, of the learned and the unlearned alike. And the reason is, that though they continue in the routine observance of all such maxims and rules of morality and religion as the existing standards of social respectability demand; yet they have no inward love and fear of God in their hearts. They wonder how Isaiah can pretend to teach them, the wise and prudent; but they will wonder in another fashion when they see what the LORD actually does: they are satisfied that their astute counsels, though hidden as it seems from the LORD, are quite competent to meet the dangers with which His prophet threatens them; but they will find that it is not from the LORD, but from its own confusion and disgrace, that this policy will have to hide itself. They have been turning things upside down at their own will: they put bitter for sweet, and call good, evil: they rest the home government, and the social prosperity of the country, upon a basis of oppression of the poor and aggrandisement of the rich by abuse of the powers of law and order; and the foreign relations of the state, on treaties degrading in themselves, and never intended to be kept faithfully, with Assyria and Egypt: and with all these schemes and practices they mean to restore, or prop up, the falling condition of a nation which has never yet prospered, except by adherence to the old fundamental principle of its constitution,—faith in the LORD, and in the covenant by which He became their King, and they His people, with mutual rights and duties. Isaiah can be as contemptuous as these 'scornful men' themselves; and he tells them that all this scheming, all

wandered along the verdant bank, I surveyed the clear stream with transport, and hastened to swallow the delightful draught; but, alas! disappointment awaked me, and I found myself a lonely captive, perishing of thirst, amid the wilds of Africa."

this turning of things upside down, is but so much clay in the hands of the Potter, who will do just what He originally intended, carrying out exactly the designs laid down by Him from the first:—all the turning upside down in the world will not alter the relation between the thing made and its maker. In a very little while there shall, indeed, be a complete reversion of the present state of things. The land was now ruled by men who were always on the watch for iniquity; who made a man obnoxious to the forms of law for trifles which had no criminal intent, in order to bring him under their extortions if they wanted his property, or under their crushing power if they wished to silence him, because he dared to plead for justice, or rebuke the unjust ruler as he sat in the gate; and this force was constantly used in the one case and the other (as the whole history of the Jews shows us), with no check but the victim's death. But these men shall be cut off, and cease; the Holy One of Israel will re-establish his authority; His word and His works shall be heard and seen of all men; and the poor and the meek will rejoice in His protection and strength. The house of Jacob might, and must, be brought low for a time, for its sins; he might be ashamed at his humiliation, and his face might wax pale at the prospect of his name being put out from among the nations, through the slaughter and captivity of his children: but the LORD who redeemed Abraham out of the naturalism in which he was living with the rest of his race, who gave him a spiritual position, and a promise to him and to his children, founded on that spiritual position,—He will remember His promise, and bring back to Jacob his children; and they too, like their first fathers, shall be seen to be not a race of merely natural, earthly creatures, but 'the work of their LORD's hands,' a chosen, spiritually organised people, capable of true wisdom and true obedience, and of actual fellowship and communion with the Holy God.

Chapter xxx. begins with a new and more direct denunciation of the Egyptian alliance, devised by the men who 'wove a web' of plots, or sought to 'cover themselves with a covering,' which Isaiah called 'a refuge of lies,' in chap. xxviii. Zoan, the Tanis of the Greeks, was a royal city, and one of the most ancient of Lower Egypt. Hanes is, probably, Hnès or

Ehnés, the Anysis of Herodotus, and the Heracleopolis which was the capital of a nome of Middle Egypt, and a royal city, as may be inferred from Manetho's mention of two Heracleote dynasties. And if there were two or more cotemporary kings in Egypt at this period (on which point the opposing facts have been already stated), it would seem not unlikely that the Jewish ambassadors may have sought Tirkakhi at the latter city; and, at the former, Sethos, the Tanitic king of whose invasion by Sennacherib Herodotus relates the well-known story.

The beginning of verse 6. may be rendered either 'Oh the burden of the beasts,' or 'As to the burden of the beasts,' the word burden being taken literally, to describe the heavy load of presents which they were carrying through the difficulties and dangers of the desert between Judea and Egypt. If, however, there were any reason (which there is not) for preferring the metaphorical sense of 'prophecy,' in which 'burden' is used elsewhere, there is still no occasion to suppose a marginal gloss, or anything more than a phrase of a form somewhat quaint to our notions; as though Isaiah had said,—'That caravan of asses and camels struggling through the sandy desert, among the lions and serpents, rises before me like a distinct vision, and deserves an episodic paragraph of its own.

'Rahab' is used here, as elsewhere, to signify Egypt; but it is uncertain whether it is an Egyptian word and name of the country, or only an enigmatical Hebrew name, like 'Ariel.' The Hebrew means 'rage,' or 'insolence,' and thence, in the opinion of some of the most eminent authorities, a 'sea monster.' But the point is not settled; and it remains doubtful whether we should here read, 'Therefore I call her Rahab the inactive,' or 'the blusterer that sitteth still;' or whether, only substituting 'Rahab' for 'strength' in our Authorised Version, we should understand the passage to mean, 'Therefore I have constantly warned the Jews that their true Egypt, their true security, is quiet faith in the LORD.'

Isaiah then goes on to show that he does not consider this alliance with Egypt as a matter of mere temporal and temporary interest; great principles, laws of universal application, are at stake, and their enunciation is worthy to be recorded in the

most public and the most permanent ways; — on the wooden or brass table, where he that runs may read, and in the parchment-roll for future and quiet study, ‘that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.’ He remarks the state of heart which was dictating their whole policy; their trust in Egypt abroad, and in ‘oppression and perverseness’ at home: he tells them their whole life is a rebellion and a lie; and that they are carrying this lie to its height, when they call on their seers and prophets, the national teachers and preachers, to help them in their work, — to tell them no more of the right, but only of the smooth, path: nay, call on them to leave the narrow, irksome way themselves, and to employ their office and powers in guiding them in that pleasant road by which they will escape from the Holy One of Israel, and His wearisome claims upon their consciences. To themselves their condition seems that of a strong and high wall, which can resist any violence from without; but the prophet discerns, what they in their blindness cannot, that there is a crack beginning within, and that this internal pressure of their moral and social iniquity will, ere long, make their wall bulge out, and come down in overwhelming ruin in an instant, and when least expected.

The expressions in verses 20 and 21. are among the indications I have already noticed, that, in the time at which Isaiah spoke, such prophets as remained faithful in the general corruption were repressed and silenced by persecution. These allusions might at first sight appear a reason for referring this prophecy to the reign of Ahaz, when the Temple was shut up, and the high priest himself assisted in new and unlawful rites; but if we remember that the power of the worldly irreligious nobles of that period was still unbroken, we shall (as I have also noticed) find no difficulty in understanding how much persecution of the spiritual teachers would be still carried on in spite of Hezekiah; and Isaiah’s encouraging tone as to the spiritual aspect of things, in contrast with the temporal afflictions he foretells, shows that he saw signs (and if he saw them, they were there) that the tide was about to turn, just as he must have done when he denounced Shebna. For we shall have a very unreal notion of the Jewish kings and people, if we suppose that their national character, even in its most

spiritual features, changed about instantly with a change of the occupant of the throne. It takes a generation to make any such important change, and especially in so tough and independent a race as the Jews always were. And, lastly, it must be noticed that the teachers were as much 'removed into a corner' by their own corruptness as by persecution.

Jeremiah describes the idols as plated, or ornamented, with plates of gold and silver, and dressed in garments of blue and purple. When Josiah was purging the land from idolatry, he is said to have 'defiled' the altars and high places by burning men's bones on them, by which act he at once expressed contempt, and prevented their being again employed for the same purpose. But these idols of which Isaiah now speaks, are the private household gods, which a merely national and public reform, like that of Hezekiah or Josiah, could never touch.

Contrasted with these dumb idols on the one hand, and on the other with the faithful teachers of the restored and converted people, is the still small voice of God himself: the word which each man shall hear for himself in the inmost recesses of his heart, as of an invisible guide continually directing him at every step, that he diverge not the least from the straight path.

The promise in verse 23. probably alludes, as so many other passages do, to the way in which the land actually lay waste in those days, whether ravaged by the enemy, or not cultivated, because men had no heart to sow where they could not hope to reap: and this picture of peaceful husbandry becomes a symbol of the political prosperity which should follow the overthrow of the Assyrians; while both — as the connection with verses 20 and 21. shows — are types of the spiritual blessings which the prophet knew to be more worthy than either. As the prison-fare, the 'bread of adversity and the water of affliction,' were the tokens of God's wrath, so this succeeding plenty is of His favour, and of His actually feeding their souls with the bread of life. Then shall the Spirit, the divine life of which the Indwelling Word is the source, be poured out like rivers and streams of water, and fertilise the soul as they do the hills. To realise the full force of this favourite image of the sudden pouring out of rivers, we must remember that in

southern countries, ravines which have been dry for the whole summer, are suddenly turned into deep rivers. The flood comes down all at once.

It is the Name, the power, and presence of the LORD, coming from far, because there was no man at hand to help, which shall work the hoped for, and promised, deliverance. By a fusion of one image with another, the judgments of the LORD upon the devastators of Israel, are described as a fierce fire with its mingled flame and smoke heavily ascending; as the sentence of a king whose word is death to the criminal; as an overwhelming torrent, like that to which the Assyrian himself was formerly compared*; as a sieve in which the corn shall not be sifted from the chaff, but a sheer riddance made of both, while both (as the ancient manner was) are exposed to the wind—the blast of ‘His breath;’ and as a bridle, not to guide them aright, but to lead them to their own destruction.

In contrast with this punishment of the great oppressor, stands the joy of the delivered nation:—

Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept;

And gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe,

To come into the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel.

All the festivals were kept ‘from even to even,’ this being the Jewish method of reckoning the day, as we see in the first chapter of Genesis, where the day is always said to begin with the evening. Thus the Sabbath began on Friday evening, and lasted till Saturday evening. But the passover was in a special manner the ‘holy solemnity kept in the night,’ and from Matthew xxvi. 30., as well as from the still existing practice of the Jews, we know that a hymn was sung at the end of the supper. These are but the more literal signs that Isaiah throughout this passage (verses 27 to 33) is connecting the now near prospect of their deliverance from the Assyrian, with the old deliverance which the LORD wrought for them in the days of Moses and Pharaoh. This connection was subsequently recognised in the preservation (or it may be origination) of the tradition that Sennacherib’s army was destroyed on the night of

* Chap. viii. 8.

the passover : and if we enter into the spirit of those awfully magnificent 11th and 12th chapters of Exodus, and into the thoughts and hopes which were kept alive in the soul of every earnest Hebrew by the sacramental institution in which that national deliverance was perennially recorded, we shall be able to realise something of the depth of meaning conveyed by Isaiah to those who heard him, in the words, ‘Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept.’ But there were other festivals which, though not less religious, called for more ‘lightness of heart’ than the passover. A tradition*, which is so exact a counterpart of the various passages in the Old Testament referring to the same and like subjects, that its accuracy can hardly be questioned, enables us to picture to the life the scene which, in Isaiah’s times, might have been witnessed all over the country, on the eve of the yearly feasts. When the season for presenting the first-fruits to the LORD and King of the nation arrived, the country-people assembled themselves in some chief village or town of their tribe. The men were required by the strict law of Moses to appear three times yearly before the LORD, and they would be accompanied by many of their wives and daughters, whether actuated, like Hannah, by the desire to offer some vow, or dedicate a first-born son in person, or only by the wish to see the great City on an occasion when the traders thronged its fairs, and the holiday-makers its feasts, as well as the worshippers its Temple. The party thus assembled passed the night before they went up to Jerusalem, in the streets, not to contract any ceremonial defilement : at daybreak the head man of the company,—perhaps the village Levite—awakened them with the words, ‘Rise, let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God;’ and they set forward in a choral procession. A bull with gilded horns, crowned with olive leaves, went first ; a piper playing on the pipe, the damsels with their timbrels, and the bearers of the baskets of wheat and grapes and the jars of honey or oil, followed after ; and the sacred dance kept time with the voices of the alternate choirs as they sang, ‘I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go up into the house of the LORD.’ The simultaneous and silent halt,

* Quoted by Vitringa, from the Talmudical Tract *Biccurim*.

the prostration in prayer, the burst of weeping, which in the present day mark the arrival of a party of Jewish pilgrims on the first rising ground which commands a view of Jerusalem, is the melancholy shadow of the exultation with which their forefathers lifted up their eyes to the hills of Zion from the same spots, and saw the 'city compact together,' with 'peace within her walls and prosperity in her palaces.' The song was frequently repeated as they drew near the city; and as 'their feet stood within its gates' the people of Jerusalem welcomed them with shouts and the priests with honour, and they proceeded to present their offerings before the LORD, 'at the same time reciting the confession in the form prescribed by Moses.' The Psalms called in our version 'Songs of Degrees,' that is, 'of steps,' or 'marches,' are all illustrated by this traditional account of the use of the one * here quoted; for all are suitable for various occasions of solemn processions to the Temple: and other Psalms such as lxviii. are easiest understood in like manner; while the subject has farther light thrown on it by the historical description of the processions composed, not of a few villagers, but of the army or of the nation, under its nobles, and headed by a David, a Solomon, or a Jehoshaphat.†

And then Isaiah unites these images with those of the destruction of the Assyrian by the glorious might of the LORD; each stroke of the 'rod of doom' which now falls on him who 'smote the nations with a perpetual stroke,' is accompanied by a burst of triumphal music‡; and he sees the chariots and armies, and the bodies of their owners, consumed in the fire of God's wrath, as the filth of the city was consumed in fires kept constantly burning for that purpose in the valley of Hinnom, on the spot which had formerly been polluted by the sacrifice of children to Moloch.

Chapter xxxi. If the whole land between Memphis and Thebes was filled with the king's stables, and if Thebes itself

* Psalm exxii. I do not mean to pronounce peremptorily on the questions as to the meaning of this title.

† 1 Chron. xv. xvi.; 2 Chron. v. vi. vii.; xx. 27, 28.

‡ "The Bœotians and other neighbours . . . danced to the sound of joyful music when the walls [of Peiræus] were demolished." — Grote's *Hist. of Greece*, ix. 449.

could (as Homer says) send two hundred warriors with chariots and horses, out of each of its hundred gates, and if the astute politicians at Jerusalem were combining with the wise councillors of Egypt to make these forces available against the common enemy, yet all this would be of no use. The LORD too has His policy and plans from which He swerves not, and which He does not carry out under the direction of worldly men, nor by their help. He will first let the nation learn the vanity of trusting in an arm of flesh, and then, when they begin to turn to Him from whom they have so deeply revolted, He will come to save them, as of old. The commentators have so repeatedly analysed the various parts of the group of poetic images of which this chapter consists, that I shall perhaps hardly be excused for adverting to the renewed allusion to the passover, when the prophet, in describing the action of the mother-bird which hovers over her nest, uses the word which gave the name to that institution.

Chapter xxxii. The deliverance of Judah is to be effected, not by Shebna and his supporters at home and abroad, but by the right hand of the LORD of the nation: its condition, on the side of the nation, is not the diplomacy of those rulers and councillors, but a national and personal turning from idols to the true God; and its result will be, not the confirmation of the wealth and power of the selfish worldly men as they hoped, nor the removal of the still existing restraints on their habits of aggrandising and enjoying themselves without regard to God or man, while they defied the one and oppressed the other;—but the establishment of righteousness throughout the land, the king and his princes ruling in justice and humanity, the priests and prophets teaching even the most ignorant to ‘understand knowledge;’ and the whole of society showing that moral reformation which is never more certainly indicated than by the right use of those words which denote men’s moral qualities. We have seen what Thucydides says on this point; but we have only to look at home to see how our neighbours and ourselves give all such words as conscience, morality, honour, virtue, charity, justice, religion, a meaning base or noble, in exact correspondence with the speaker’s own moral state.

Men have, more than women, to do with specific movements

and changes in a nation's social life ; but the regular, ordinary, ceaseless current of that life is carried forward by women : the women whom Isaiah now addresses, were at ease in the midst of the imminent invasion and siege, because the calamity had not yet touched *them* : *their* vintage had not yet failed ; the 'careless daughters' of Jerusalem still found their wonted luxuries and enjoyments in the palaces of the crowded and joyous city ; and by this carelessness of the future while the present was so to their taste, they did but reflect, as in a mirror, the like worldly condition of their fathers, husbands, brothers. Therefore the prophet warns them that a day of trouble is coming, which will touch them nearly enough ; — a day of social and domestic, as well as of political affliction, when those rich and luxurious ladies will be seen clad in sackcloth, alike indicating the poverty into which they have fallen, and the grief with which they mourn the various other calamities which war, and its attendant famine, have brought into their once prosperous homes. But, again, the promise follows close on the threatening : these woes may last for a long and indefinite time (as the word rendered 'for ever' properly implies) ; but at last 'the spirit will be poured on the nations from on high ;' the whole land shall be fruitful with righteousness, and with peace the effect of righteousness ; and the wife and the mother, no longer 'careless,' but having found the blessedness of trusting in the true source of peace, shall again know, after a better manner than before, what it is to 'dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in quiet resting-places.' Yet they must expect this blessing in the midst of humiliations, and on condition of much patient labour ; they must be ready to sow — nay, if need be, to reap — the seed of repentance, and faith, and of a new life, while the storm is still beating down all their former worldly prosperity.

The fact, that this prediction of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, has been handed down to us by Isaiah, or his disciples, though they knew that it was not fulfilled ; and that they have themselves taken care to assure us that it was not fulfilled by any event of their own day ; shows clearly that they had little notion that prophecy was the literal prediction of such events, and still less that such literal coincidence between pre-

diction and event, was the test of the speaker's words being a true message from God.

Chapter xxxiii. As the conclusion to this series of woes against the various classes whose sins had brought the Assyrian invasion upon the country as God's appropriate instrument of punishment, succeeds the prophet's triumphant denunciation of still fuller woe upon the great spoiler himself. He has reached the very climax of his power, and no longer conceals his ultimate designs against Judah: and the baffled ambassadors of Hezekiah return to their master to report with weeping, that Sennacherib indeed had taken the tribute and presents with which they hoped to purchase his departure, but was not the less actively pressing the siege of the fortresses in the south of Judah, which were falling one after another into his hands; that his hordes of barbarian cavalry were sweeping the whole country, so that it was no longer possible for the peasant to work in the fields, nor for the traveller to pass along the high roads*; and that it was now his avowed intention to carry out the complete policy of Assyrian conquest, by transporting the native inhabitants to some other country, which had suffered the like subjugation, and of which its natives would in turn supply their place.

This, says the prophet, is the very crisis for which we had to wait, morning after morning: the Egyptian alliance, the diplomacy of Shebna, the humiliation and submission of Hezekiah, have alike proved in vain: all hope of help from man is past, and therefore God's time is come; the LORD of the nation must, and will, keep His covenant now, which He made with Abraham and his seed for for a thousand generations:—

Now will I rise, saith the LORD;

Now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.

* "The villages and the Arab tribes had not suffered less than the townspeople. The pasha was accustomed to give instructions to those who were sent to collect money, in three words, "Go, destroy, eat" (pillage); and his agents were not generally backward in entering into the spirit of them. The tribes who had been attacked and plundered, were retaliating upon caravans and travellers, or laying waste the cultivated parts of the pashalic. The villages were deserted, and the roads were little frequented and very insecure." — Layard's *Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. i. ch. 2.

And so signal will be the manifestation of God's power and presence in the destruction of this enemy, that even the sinners and the hypocrites in Zion will be conscience-stricken by it, and be made to know in their hearts, that to fall into the hands of the living and holy LORD is more to be dreaded than to come under the power of Sennacherib; but the righteous, on the other hand, will feel and know that he *can* dwell with the devouring fire, for it is a fire of love, and not of wrath, to him; and to him, relying wholly on that love, and living according to its law, the deliverance from Sennacherib will be the symbol of his spiritual security. In the day of trouble he has a high and strong fortress, which no enemy can scale, and where neither bread nor water will fail; and the day of deliverance will soon follow, to restore him to the light of God's countenance, and the blessings of His kingdom,—just as the inhabitants of Jerusalem would, when the siege was raised, see their king Hezekiah again in the robes of state which he had now laid aside for sackcloth or armour, or recovered from the sickness which had perhaps already attacked him; and would be able to go abroad at will into the country, from which they were now shut up within the walls and closed gates of Jerusalem.* Then they will look back on the past terror, when they were called on to pay the tribute-money, which was, if possible, to buy off the foreigners whose harsh and unintelligible tongue was heard reckoning its amount, or counting the towers which still stood between them and their booty;—as when Rab-shakeh appeared under the walls, and summoned them to surrender. To the present confusion in which the land is involved, shall succeed, not only peace, but a restoration of their national unity. Of this the national festivals were the symbols, because they brought the several tribes together from all parts of the kingdom, and based these occasions of meeting for pleasure or business, upon a united national worship, which recognised the LORD of each man and tribe as the Founder and Head of the

* “Ergo omnis longo solvit se Teucria luctu;
Panduntur portæ; juvat ire, et Dorica castra
Desertosque videre locos, littusque relictum.
Hic Dolopum manus, hic sævus tendebat Achilles.”

Virg. *Æn.* ii. 26.

Commonwealth; as the Lawgiver and the Judge; and as the King, in the Majesty of whose person the legislative and executive, the civil and ecclesiastical functions met, as in something greater than any. Only in the Divine King, and not in any one of His earthly and finite representatives, could this union of all characters in a single person be fitly made.

Among the images which crowd the concluding verses of this chapter, we may perhaps, without fancifulness, distinguish an under-current of thoughts suggested by the circumstances of the times at which this prophecy was delivered: the promised 'quiet' seems to point to the existing commotion; the 'tabernacle which shall not be taken down,' reminds us, not only of the fast-founded temple which had replaced the tabernacle, and become the fixed centre of their 'solemnities,' but also of the tents of Sennacherib's hosts now blackening * the valleys round Jerusalem, but soon to be swept away 'like the thistle-down before the whirlwind;' the 'broad rivers and streams' suggest the thought that though Hezekiah's precautions would have secured the absolutely necessary supply of water for the beleagured city, they felt the want of that abundance of it which is still more grateful in an Eastern climate than in our own: while the promise that 'the inhabitant should no longer say, I am sick,' favours the conjecture that the illness of Hezekiah may have been one instance of the disease which usually attends on the confinement and discomforts of a city shut up against an enemy in the field. Numerous other points of poetical and philosophical interest will occur to the reader, with or without the help of the commentators; not the least of which is the evangelical prophet's anticipation of Him who saith to the *sick* man, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.'

Chapters xxxiv. xxxv. In 2 Chronicles, xxviii. 16, 17. we read that in the reign of Ahaz, 'the Edomites smote Judah and carried away captives,' and that this was one of the motives for the fatal application to Assyria for protection. This inroad was, no doubt, like that of the Philistines, a revolt against the authority which in the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, as of the

* Then, as now, made of black camels' or goats' hair. See the accounts of Modern Travellers; and Canticles, i. 5.

other stronger kings, kept this half-civilised race in a tributary state; and we hardly needed to find 'Huduma,' like Ashdod and Beth-Ammon, among the list of the countries whose kings, according to Sennacherib's annals (already referred to) brought him 'their accustomed tribute,' after his conquest of Phenicia, to authorize our extending to Edom the supposition that it, as well as Philistia and Moab, suffered more or less at this period from the Assyrians, and submitted again to dependence on Judah, when Hezekiah's power was re-established after the overthrow of Sennacherib. Still I think most readers will feel that to refer this prophecy (as Grotius and some others do) to such a series of events, is not satisfactory: and that it was a just consciousness of the inadequacy of this interpretation which led Cyril and Theodoret to explain it of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish commonwealth; the rabbis to believe that it predicted the downfall of Christian, the protestants, that of Papal, Rome; and other commentators to find in it threatenings of the general destruction of the enemies of the Church, of the overthrow of anti-Christ, or even of some anti-Christian power hereafter to rise up in ancient Idumea.* All indicate a sense of the gravity of the prophecy, beyond what the name of Edom can sustain: and—while the greater part of what is true in the feeling is brought into its proper light, by the recognition that the prophet is the enunciator of universal laws, which his cotemporaries were to apply to the events of their own day, and the following generations to read more clearly by help of the illustration which those events had afforded,—I believe the question, What, then, was the specific event to which the chapters before us allude? is most simply and most satisfactorily answered by saying, that it is the overthrow of the power of Sennacherib. The use of Edom as a mystical name for the Assyrian domination, is in accordance with the other instances of the kind which I have referred to on chapter xxv. 10. and throws light on them, as they do on it; the general resemblance of this prophecy to that of chapters xiii. xiv.; its promises expressed under the image of ransomed captives returning through the deserts which separate Judea from Babylonia; and not

* Alexander, on the passage.

least its place in the book; all point to this, as Isaiah's own meaning. If it were necessary to find a reason for his selection of this particular type, we might do so in the connection between the image of the great sacrifice and the thought of the countless flocks of Edom.

The Day of Judgement, in which the LORD gives His decision in the long-pending controversy between Zion, the Kingdom of Righteousness, and Assyria, the Kingdom of Force, is come: and the Judge of all the earth summons the nations to hear His sentence. It is against the king of mere power, and against the nations themselves, in as far as they have taken mere power to be their law and their god, and are serving in its armies. It is a sentence of death, of extermination of the enemies of God and man, who are to be made a sin-offering to God's justice, that so righteousness may be re-established in the world. Their land shall be soaked with blood: the fire and smoke of that altar shall be like the fire and smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah: the walls of its cities shall be levelled by the 'line of confusion and the plummet of emptiness:' to its hereditary nobles shall succeed families of wild beasts and birds, which shall enter into regular possession, generation after generation, and hold their courts in the desolate palaces: the LORD Himself parcels out the land among these invaders, and registers the inheritance of each family (as Joshua did for the children of Israel*), in order that each may be secured in it for ever. And, then follows the 'recompense' of Judah, whose condition the prophet implies, though he beautifully abstains from asserting in detail, to have been much that which is now coming on her enemies. The contrast between Edom wholly possessed by wild animals, and Judah with its human inhabitants restored to their national and religious privileges, is very poetical. In the last chapter every thing was ferine—patriarchs, inheritances, palaces, genealogies: in this (xxxv.), even the earth is human—breaks into shouts of joy, while the forests and fields assist in the triumphal return of the Divine King at the head of His people. The reader will judge, according to his own taste and feeling of the laws of poetic imagination, whether these images only present a picture of the general and complete change from desolation to

* Joshua, xviii. 8, 9, 10.

prosperity: or whether he will say, with Vitringa, that ‘the glory of Lebanon,’ which consisted in its cedars and other great trees, points to faithful teachers, pastors, and princes; while ‘the excellency of Carmel’ with its fruit-bearing slopes, and of Sharon with the numerous flocks and herds which fed in its pleasant pastures of grass and flowers, represent the people of the Church and nation. In the prospect of this deliverance, the hands now falling from the attitude of prayer or of action, the knees now tottering for lack of firm faith and hope, and the hearts now flurried and impatient from fear, may regain strength; the LORD Himself is coming to save, and in that day the blind and deaf will see and hear, and the lame and dumb will, not only recover their powers, but use them with delight. The mirage—the Hebrew word is that still used by the Arabs—shall become a real lake; and springs shall break out in the dry, sandy desert,—yet not merely to serve the purpose of providing the jackals with marshy haunts, but in order to supply men and women—the returning captives—with water on their road.*

The desert is naturally pathless as well as barren; but in the day of this universal regeneration, the faint track through the sands shall be replaced by a solid, embanked causeway, which shall not only be there, but be actually used; as seems to be meant by the words, ‘A highway shall be there, and a way.’ Highways are among the characteristic features of civilisation in a country, since they are the means of regular and easy communication between the opposite parts, and especially of all with the capital: but in times of foreign invasion they fall first into the power of the enemy, and are most completely deserted by the inhabitants—‘the highways are unoccupied, and the travellers walk through by-ways:’† and in Judea, or any other country where wild beasts still exist, these keep aloof from the roads, as long as they are kept open by traffic; but re-appear in them if unfrequented, as in the story of the old prophet who met the lion on the way from Bethel. And this high road shall not only be so well marked and made, that the most ignorant and inexperienced shall keep his way

* See Mr. Layard’s curious account of the Mesopotamian marshes.—*Nineveh and Babylon*, chap. xxiv.

† Judges, v. 6. Compare the note at page 263. above.

there without difficulty, but neither shall it be appropriated by the unclean heathens, nor stopped by any roaring lion, — any Sennacherib, or spiritual archetype of Sennacherib. It shall be called, for it shall really be, ‘the way of holiness,’ the road set apart for the use of the LORD’s own chosen and consecrated people, whom He has redeemed and brought back from bondage: it shall be entirely for *those*. And here again the reader may choose whether he will, with Vitringa and others, explain this way — ‘the old path, the good way in which ye shall find rest for your souls,’* — to be the ‘canon of faith and practice,’ embodied in the creeds, sacraments, and other formularies and symbols, as the ways, the methods, by which we go forward to perfection, going up to the city and presence of God, and to communion with Him; or whether He will say, less definitely, but not less forcibly, with Gill †, that it is ‘a way cast up by sovereign grace, which is raised above the mire and dirt of sin, and carries over it and from it.’

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
And shall come to Zion with songs,
And everlasting joy upon their heads: —

Of the wonted processions in which kings, village communities, and private persons, went up to the temple at the great feasts, or on other occasions of national or personal thanksgiving after a harvest or a victory, a sickness or a return from captivity, I have lately spoken. So I have of that habit of poets, and of none more than Isaiah, of preferring manifold to single images, which may here authorise us to take all ‡, rather than any one, of the commentators’ explanations of the phrase ‘everlasting joy upon their heads.’ Allusions to the crowns of the king, the priest, and the bridegroom§, and at the same time to the practice of anointing their heads, and the heads of persons on other festive occasions, with oil||, are quite compatible with the thought that the joy expresses itself in the countenance, or even that it is figured as a radiance of glory about the heads of

* Jeremiah, vi. 16.

† Quoted by Alexander.

‡ Except, indeed, that of Forerius given by Alexander.

§ Canticles, iii. 11.

|| Compare Psalm xlv. 7.; Eccl. ix. 8.; Isaiah, lxi. 3.

the redeemed ones. We may, however, notice, with Vitringa, the clear reference, in the passages just quoted, to oil as the symbol of gladness: oil, he goes on to say, represents the Holy Spirit; and it is the pouring out of this upon the redeemed, who are returning to enter into communion with the LORD in His Church, that the prophet speaks. Here, as so constantly, Vitringa's comments want nothing, but a more distinct recognition that Isaiah's words were full of spiritual meaning to the pious Jews of his own day, and in relation to the then Zion and Church, and were felt by them to be so.

The more than usually trivial arguments against the genuineness of these two chapters, would hardly deserve even the passing notice which I here give them, if there had been no unavowed motive for the criticism, and no subsequent use to be made of its conclusions. But the reader must keep his eyes open to the fact, that if he here consents to abandon positive for conjectural criticism, he will inevitably prejudge, and without the evidence, the coming question of the authorship of the last twenty-six chapters of this Book. Positive criticism, such as he would be ashamed not to apply to any other book but the Bible, will tell him that the prophecy before us is by Isaiah, and in his best manner, whether we look at the poetic unity, vigour, sublimity, beauty of the composition; at the high moral, political, and religious tone of thought and feeling; or at the special direction which these take: while the speculative criticism offers him an array of such hypotheses as that these two chapters do not make one whole; that their style is diffuse and verbose; that they are full of extravagant expressions of revengeful malice; the work of a writer long after the times of Isaiah; and composed by him as a sort of summary of chapters xl. to lxvi., which are to be ascribed to another unknown author. Let the true student examine the case thoroughly for himself.

CHAPTER XX.

ISAIAH XXXVI., XXXVII.: HISTORICAL EVENTS OF SENNACHERIB'S INVASION AND RETREAT — HIS LETTER — HOW ANSWERED. — UNCONSCIOUS GENIUS IN THE NARRATIVE. — RAB-SHAKEH'S THEOLOGY. — ISAIAH'S INSPIRATION. — 'THE INCARNATE WRATH OF GOD.' — ZION'S DEFIANCE. — THE 'SIGN' OF THE SPONTANEOUS CROPS. — THE DESTROYING ANGEL. — SETHOS DELIVERED BY VULCAN. — VALUE OF SENNACHERIB'S ANNALS, IF ESTABLISHED — THEIR ALTERED TONE AFTER THIS YEAR. — GERMAN WAR OF FREEDOM. — HISTORY TEACHES A BELIEF IN PROVIDENCE. — NIEBUHR. — GROTE.

THERE has been much discussion as to whether the historical narrative in the following chapters, or its slightly varying counterpart in the 2nd Book of Kings, is the original; or whether both are taken from some third work now lost, and which may also have supplied the materials for the different account of the same events in the 2nd Book of Chronicles; and what was the share of Isaiah himself in the actual or supposed narratives. We are told* that he wrote a complete history of the reign of Uzziah; and if he wrote that of Hezekiah also, it would be quite intelligible that the main part of this should, on the one hand, be incorporated into the Book of Kings, and on the other, into this book of his own prophecies, with such omissions and amplifications as the purposes of each required. The opinion that this was done in the latter case by some compiler and editor of the prophet's writings, has its advocates: but I persuade myself that, in proportion to the reader's study of the book as a whole, and as we have it, he has seen indications of a unity of design in the arrangement of the several prophecies, and of the various pieces of narrative connecting them; and has consequently found that arrangement so interesting and important, for the light it throws on each part, and for the epic character it gives to the whole, as to be worthy of Isaiah himself, and

* 2 Chron. xxvi. 22.

perhaps above the reach of any of his successors of whom we know anything.

We have also here again some obscurity as to certain details of the events now taking place; and of which these narratives, with the yet imperfectly read inscriptions, are the remaining records. We may not be able to pronounce positively whether Sennacherib was now on his way to Egypt; whether he had actually taken, or was still baffled by the walls of Lachish and Libnah; whether Rab-shakeh withdrew the troops which had accompanied him to Jerusalem, when he himself returned to Sennacherib's head-quarters; or whether — because he was only an ambassador, and Tartan and Rabсарis the generals, or for any other reason — they were left behind to begin the siege; whether it was the destruction of this detached army, by plague already begun within the walls of Jerusalem, or by some more sudden catastrophe, that compelled Sennacherib to fly to his own land; nor decide other like questions, for and against which much has been, and may be, said. But the careful examination of the alternatives (for which I refer the reader to the commentators themselves) enables us to get all the general light we require for a distinct view of the great political features of the period: though this examination will show us that there are dark patches of shadow, or undefined marks, where we had hoped to make out specific forms on a nearer approach, still we find that, on again retiring to the right point of distance for seeing the whole as the picture it is, and is meant to be, it tells its story quite well; and that we may learn from it all we need to know. We see that in the regular advance of the Assyrian power, it had reached the point at which Sennacherib could cease to temporise with Judah, and might proceed completely to absorb the tributary state into the empire. The kingdom of Samaria had already followed the fate of Damascus in this respect: the taking of Ashdod had not only opened the road to Egypt, but also turned the position of Judah: the plunder of No-Ammon had sharpened the appetites of the northern invaders for new campaigns and conquests: and if Sennacherib thought it well to try and intimidate Hezekiah and his people into surrendering cities, which even Tartan himself would have had difficulty in taking until they were starved out, we may

infer from the insolent way in which he still avows his ultimate intentions if they did surrender, that he really had no fear for the result, even though he should be obliged to fight Tirhakah, with Judah unconquered and assisting the Egyptians. The justness of the belief which (as we learn from Herodotus) was held by the Egyptians, as well as by the Hebrews, that nothing but an interposition of God's hand could at this moment have broken the great Assyrian power, is confirmed by this conduct of Sennacherib and his messenger, no less than by the despair of help from human counsels, or arms, which Hezekiah manifests on receiving the report of the message, and the letter by which it was afterwards followed. There is some truth in the observation, though it may have been made scoffingly, that Hezekiah's character on the present occasion resembles that of David in its devotion more than in its energy; for the powers of the Hebrew monarchy, and its reigning king, *were* too feeble to resist that incarnation of universal despotism, if they could not obtain a form and degree of support which David did not need for the assertion of the independence and superiority of his kingdom, among the surrounding nations. It was true, as Sennacherib boasted, that a power had arisen against which nation after nation had found its faith, and institutions, and arms, unable to make any head: and if the utter destruction which had come upon Ephraim, no less than upon the peoples and kings whose names the Assyrian recites in his letter, exactly in the fashion in which he recited, and we now read, them on the obelisks or bulls at Nineveh, was not to fall now on Judah also, it must be by the help of a stronger hand than had interfered for any of them. The conviction that the LORD of Israel was strong enough, and no less willing, to keep His covenant by defending the nation against all its enemies, had no doubt supported Hezekiah hitherto: but it would have been insufficient, in this moment, to meet the terrible feeling that he was now in the actual presence and power of the representative of irresistible arbitrary force, unless a higher truth had come to sustain this lower one, and he had realised (as men only do realise in some extremity of their own helplessness) that there was an Absolute Will retaining the mastery over that irresistible force, however crushing it might seem; and that the LORD of Israel

who 'dwelt between the cherubims,' was Himself the God, the only God, of all the kingdoms of the earth, and so of this Assyrian kingdom among the rest. And then we see how this truth, which the pious Hezekiah had known and acknowledged before, but which now came to him with all the reality of life and death, begets a likeness to itself in the mind which it informs; for just as the idea of, and faith in, the LORD of the nation, expands into, yet remains a living part of, the higher consciousness that He is the LORD who made and still rules the heavens and earth, so Hezekiah's patriotic interest in, and prayer for, the preservation of his own people, expands itself into a desire for the honour of God, as its ultimate object: 'Now, therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD, even Thou only.'

We are so familiar from childhood with these Scripture narratives, and they are so unpretending in their form, that it is usually only after some distinct effort of examination by help of commentaries or lexicons, that we notice (as we do then notice) the marks which they abound with, of unconscious genius in the selection of the really characteristic points of the story.* The short peremptory letter of Sennacherib, not only brings out the acts of Hezekiah which we have just been considering, but also the more vulgar insolence of Rab-shakeh, who will not give Hezekiah the title of king at all, while he rings the changes upon 'my master, the great king, the king of Assyria.' And again the address of Rab-shakeh to Eliakim and his fellow-ministers, is artfully differenced from that in which, in defiance of their request, he appeals to the men on the wall: with the latter he makes the surrender a question of mere selfish consideration, how to escape the famine which is likely to accompany the siege, and to have plenty to eat and drink thereafter; while to the ministers of state he urges their utter want of power to resist, and, moreover, condescends to argue (on their own ground as he supposes) the theological question, whether Heze-

* The official report by the centurion of his irregular proceedings, the politic speeches and conduct of Paul, and the oration of Tertullian, are among the instances, of which the Book of Acts is perhaps fuller than any other.

kiah can hope for the support of a God whose altars he has taken away, with a patronising scepticism which singularly resembles the style in which the sceptic in our own day often undertakes to enlighten some one who has spent years in the study and practice of the Christian creed and life, as to the consequences of his own belief, — wholly unconscious that his talk is as much beside the mark as if he were to set right a Newton or a Laplace, though himself unacquainted with the first elements of physical science. The theology and the politics of both Rab-shakeh's speeches, and his inability to understand that his hearers were actuated by a sentiment of patriotism, as well as by those other interests or superstitions which he thinks he meets so cleverly, may be compared and contrasted with Hezekiah's address to his people, and their reception of it *, as well as with his prayer to God, and his message to Isaiah.

I am as unable as those before me, to suggest any reason why the communications between Hezekiah and Isaiah were carried on by message, upon the occasions specified in the text. The dispute whether verse 7. of chapter xxxvii. is a miraculous prediction, or an interpolation after the event, may be superseded by the consideration that men would not differ from the brutes that perish, if they had no power of anticipating the future from their knowledge of the past and present. The most foolish man has something of this power, as to those events in which he is vitally interested, though he may exercise it rather as an instinct than as a deliberate act of reason; and much more the wise man. A man with such large 'discourse of reason,' with such original and such cultivated genius as Isaiah, is, indeed, God's most wonderful creation; but I cannot think it does honour to the Creator to suppose that the Hebrew prophet — being such as he was, and acquainted not only with the general laws which govern the rise and fall of despotisms, and prescribe small interval between a tyrant's failure in the field and violent death at home, but also with many details of Sennacherib's position and circumstances unknown to us — could not have predicted the fate of the Assyrian in the terms he does, without some special suspension of the ordinary, regular, work-

* Quoted in page 220. above.

ing of the prophet's inspired mind. That Isaiah was inspired, that these utterances of his human wisdom and knowledge were all originated, sustained, and directed by the actually present, indwelling, Holy Ghost, and that the daily, hourly, habitual, prayer of faith was the means of keeping up this communion of the prophet with his God, I am anxious to assert in the most explicit words I can find; and this, not to prove my own orthodoxy to myself or others, but as a point of positive (as distinguished from hypothetical) criticism, which must be recognised to be a *fact*, before any effective literary and philosophical examination of Isaiah's writings is possible: and whether such a recognition of Isaiah's inspiration is most hindered by the hypothesis of a miracle, or that of an interpolation, it would be difficult to decide. And that each hypothesis is opposed to the facts, no less than to the spirit, of the narrative, will appear if we compare the historical detail of Sennacherib's overthrow and death as given, after the event, in verses 36, 37, 38. of chapter xxxvii., with the general expressions of Isaiah both in his first short answer to Hezekiah, and in the longer rhythmical one: for a miraculous communication, whether real or forged, should surely have contained those details, in order effectually to answer its purpose; and if Isaiah had supposed that his first words did convey such an oracular prediction, he would hardly have omitted to repeat and dwell upon them in his subsequent prophecy, which he expressly calls 'the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning Sennacherib, king of Assyria:'—unless, indeed, we suppose that on both occasions the prophet was a mere automaton emitting articulate sounds.

When Rab-shakeh asserts, in his master's name, 'the LORD said unto me, Go up against this land and destroy it,' we are reminded both of Timour's declaration that he was the incarnate wrath of God, and also of the less religious belief of Napoleon, and other military despots, in their destiny. Yet Sennacherib's self-confidence is essentially atheistic; and is in this respect in accordance with all we know of military despotisms, modern no less than ancient, when they are at their climax: the old forms of worship will be retained, like the old forms of government, where they do not interfere with, or are even useful instruments of, the despot; but when the physical force he wields is become

the only real law, and no appeal remains from it to duties and rights, nor to an Absolute Justice the source of these, he himself becomes — for is he not? — the god, or rather anti-god of those he rules. But the confidence of the virgin daughter of Zion in the strength of her LORD, and her consequent scornful defiance, are not less bold and peremptory than the Assyrian's: and the fact that her LORD makes her cause His own, and that He has been insulted in her person, makes it the more certain that He will answer Hezekiah's prayer, and avenge His own honour.

It is probable that the word ' virgin ' here, as in the usage of other languages and times, implies that the city is impregnable: and that Lebanon here, as elsewhere *, stands for the land of Israel, having been possibly suggested by the thought of the success with which the Assyrians employed their cavalry in a country where it might have been expected to prove only an encumbrance, so that they seemed as if they could literally take the precipitous and wooded heights of Lebanon itself with their multitude of chariots and horses: the tall cedars and choice fir-trees, the border-heights, and the garden-like, or fruit-bearing, forests, are images, with more or less special allusion, of the princes and people, the temple, the cities, and the cultivated country of Judea. Dr. Alexander well observes, that the force of the words of this and the next (24th and 25th) verses is much greater, if we preserve the distinction of tenses in the original: the Assyrian *has* scaled the impregnable mountains and forests, he *will* take actual possession of all that he finds therein; he *has* led his vast armies through the great deserts between Babylonia and Egypt, digging and drinking water, and he *will* tread the streams of Egypt dry, like so many puddles, — the drought and the flood being equally under his control.† There is

* Jerem. xxii. 23.; Ezek. xvii. 3. 12.; Habak. ii. 17.; Zechar. xi. 1.

†

"Cum cesserit omnis

Obsequiis natura meis? Subsidiere nostris

Sub pedibus montes; arescere vidimus amnes: —

Fregi Alpes, galeisque Padum victricibus hausi."

Claudian's Speech of Alaric: *De Bello Getic.* 526.

"Credimus altos

Defecisse amnes, epotaque flumina Medo."

Juv. *Sat.* x. 176. Quoted by Lowth and Gesenius.

a like mixture of symbol and fact in the one verse and the other.

Such is the boast which Sennacherib has ventured to utter against the Holy One of Israel. Observe the emphasis of the expression: the Holy One of Israel is a Being whose Majesty no one violates with impunity, and who, if He be not sanctified by men, sanctifies Himself in judgments.* Isaiah had, at an earlier stage of the Assyrian conquests †, referred to these, we know habitual, boasts, and had replied to them that the conquerors were merely the instruments for carrying out God's predetermined and pre-arranged plan: and he makes the same reply again now, only that there he dwelt on the corrective discipline to which Zion was to be submitted according to that plan, while here he assumes that the discipline has wrought its work, and that the scourge is done with. On comparing the images in verse 27. with those in verses 30, 31. we see that the actual devastation of the cultivated country suggests that under-current of thought, which is more or less traceable in all poetry; though the images themselves, in the first verse, are those of grass and green crops, which are so feeble as to fall at once before the scythe, or even to die of themselves in a few weeks; — nay, to heighten the emphasis, of the still feebler weeds which grow up in the chance dust and moisture on the housetops, and the corn which is sickly from its root. The following threat, of curbing and leading Sennacherib like a brute beast, is singularly illustrated by the bas-reliefs of Holwan and Khorsabad, which represent prisoners actually led in triumph by a hook through the nose and lips.

The 'sign' which Isaiah goes on to promise, in terms apparently made obscure in order to excite consideration, seems best explained to mean, that the Assyrian devastations of the open country of the Jews had prevented the regular cropping of the land, and consequently the regular harvest, for the current year: and as the enemy was still in occupation of the country, there was no possibility of ploughing and sowing in preparation for the next year either; but the season after that, the prophet con-

* Compare chapters v. 16., x. 17., xxix. 23.

† Chapter x.

fidently asserts that they would be able to sow and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.* The promise is thus brought into strict harmony with the previous threat †, that ‘the vintage should fail, and the gathering not come,’ for a time which we must understand Isaiah there to say would be considerable, — whether we understand the ‘days above a year’ of the original to mean ‘more than a full year,’ or look only at the general expressions in the following verses of the passage referred to. That what Isaiah meant there, he may have meant now, might seem answer enough to the objection, that those who give this explanation of the prediction of the loss of two harvests, must suppose the prophet to have expected the Assyrian occupation to last much longer than the history shows that it did: but the objection itself vanishes, if we recollect that the movements of great armies against, and over, a country defended by deserts, and mountains, and fortified cities; the political negotiations which preceded and followed these movements; and the recovery of depopulated villages, and wasted cornfields and vineyards; were not events which could begin and end within any such short space as it takes to write or read of them. Instances of two, and even three crops from one sowing are mentioned by Strabo, and are also said to occur in California at the present time.

This sign is analogous in character to those of ‘Immanuel’ and ‘Maher-shalal-hash-baz,’ as well as to that given to Moses at the Burning Bush ‡; and, we may add, to those of the rainbow; and of the water, and the bread and wine, of the Christian sacraments; and of all other symbols, of which the purpose is, not to establish faith in a future miracle because a present

* Thus the Spartan envoys express their sympathy with the Athenians who, in bearing the brunt of the Persian invasion, ‘had already been deprived of two harvests:’ where Mr. Grote observes that as this was spoken before the invasion of Mardonius, the loss of *two* crops must mean the loss of the harvest of the past summer, together with the seed of the autumn immediately following; and that the advice of Themistocles to his countrymen, that ‘every one should repair his house and attend to sowing his ground,’ must have been found impracticable in most cases to carry into effect during that autumn. — Herod. viii. 142.: Grote’s *History of Greece* v. 202.

† Isaiah, xxxii. 10.

‡ Exodus, iii. 12.

one has been wrought, but to supply such an outward and visible sign of the accompanying inward spiritual grace, as will, from the very constitution of man's being (of soul and body united), help him to realise the latter, as he could not do by any naked mental effort. And the thing here signified has itself an inward and an outward part: for, as the spontaneously sowed and multiplied corn and fruit will be the foundation and materials of the regular cultivation of the third year, so will the deserted villages and farms be replenished with the survivors of those who have for the present found refuge within the walls of Jerusalem; and both the one and the other will be the types of that 'holy seed,' the existence of which in the corrupt nation was made known to Isaiah at his first calling to the prophetic office, when he was told that he was to watch and wait, with the long patience of the husbandman, for the growing up of that seed, after the hard ground had been broken up, and the rampant weeds rooted out, by the ploughshare of repeated national calamity. 'The zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this. . . . For I will defend this city to save it, saith the LORD, for mine own sake, and my servant David's sake.' David was the personal representative of the faith and righteousness of the nation, in the day that God renewed with him His covenant to continue the name and the kingdom of Israel for ever*; and that covenant God would keep, as long as there were any who in heart were of David's race, for their and David's sake: — for their faith and righteousness were not the less to be rewarded, because these were the free gift of God, and the result of His choosing them, and not of their choosing Him.

I do not attempt to add to the discussion of the questions, whether 'the angel of the LORD,' that minister of His, which did His pleasure on the Assyrians, was a tempest, a hot wind, a pestilence, or some other of those powers of nature which, when employed by God's providence, are usually called His angels by the Hebrews; whether there is any such improbability in the more explicit statement in the Book of Kings, — that this great multitude were destroyed in a single night — as demands that it should be restricted by the terms of the ac-

* 2 Samuel, vii. 12, 13.

count before us, and of that in the Chronicles; and whether the Egyptian record of the same catastrophe, as preserved by Herodotus, throws any further light upon it. A positive determination of them is not at all necessary to our substantial understanding of the case; though, of course, every fact of history, however minute, may have its value, when ascertained to be a fact; and it is unfortunate that the modern commentators on this passage should show so much disposition to bend their criticism to a foregone conclusion, orthodox or rationalist. The story of Herodotus seems to me erroneously called a transfer of the scene of the event to Egypt, and a substitution of the names of Sethos and Vulcan for Hezekiah and Jehovah: Sennacherib's army was menacing Egypt as well as Judea at the time, if he had not already beaten 'the kings of Egypt with the horsemen and footmen belonging to the King of Ethiopia, of which the numbers could not be counted;' and a detachment, like that sent to Jerusalem, may have appeared at Pelusium: and certainly the matter of interest and thankfulness to Sethos was that he and his country, not that Hezekiah and the Jews, were delivered by the providential destruction of their common enemy. And though we admit as probable, nay certain, that all the coatings of the superstition which represented the Egyptian god Vulcan as the deliverer, were not the additions of a later priestcraft; though we allow that this was more or less the belief of Sethos himself, and that he could not 'speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts,' with that clearness of heart and mind with which Isaiah had foretold that the Egyptians should 'know the LORD in the day that He sent a Saviour to deliver them;' still the student who has an eye for the good, as well as for the evil, of the religions of the world, will not fail to distinguish in the narrative of Herodotus, the record of a true though imperfect recognition by the Egyptians that neither Sennacherib, nor Tirhakeh, but an invisible and divine LORD, was the real master of Egypt and its destinies, and that this providential deliverance was so clear an instance of His rule, that it should awaken a sentiment of piety in every one who learnt the story: — *ἐς ἐμέ τις ὀρέων, εὐσεβὴς ἔστω*.*

* This mention of Sethos, or Zet, by Herodotus, as the cotemporary of Sennacherib, and therefore of Tirhakeh, is in favour of those who hold the

If the reading of Sennacherib's annals, as to this war, be established, it will relieve the student of Isaiah's prophecies and policy, of a certain difficulty. We have hitherto had to make out a history of this Assyrian campaign from fragmentary facts and allusions; and the notices in these and the corresponding chapters, taken with the account of Herodotus, and the inscription on a temple at Thebes which, according to Wilkinson, records Tirhakeh's successful opposition to Sennacherib, indicated the most probable supposition to be that the Assyrian king retreated from the Ethiopian, either after sustaining, or without waiting for, a battle in the south-west of Judea. And then to bring this into harmony with Isaiah's steady denunciation of the alliance of Israel with Egypt, which might thus seem to have succeeded, instead of failing as he predicted, we must consider that Sennacherib's boast, that Tirhakeh would not be able to help Hezekiah, was well founded when uttered; and that the Ethiopian army would not have ventured to attack that of Sennacherib, unless the latter had first been weakened by the great and sudden destruction effected in it by the immediate hand of God. This would indeed be a sufficient fulfilment of the spirit of the prophet's language, rightly understood; and we may be quite content if we have no better. But it cannot be denied that Sennacherib's own account, that he not only fought, but thoroughly beat, the countless hosts of Egypt and Ethiopia at Lachish, and executed all the chief men among his prisoners at Libnah, suits the prophet's express anticipations much better; while the after abandonment of his advantage by Sennacherib meets the requirements of the narrative of Herodotus, at least as well as the other supposition.

The revolt of Babylon and of the Medes, and perhaps of other dependencies not mentioned in history as these are, concurred to weaken the Assyrian empire of the sword at this period; and Sennacherib 'decamped, departed, returned, remained at Nineveh,'—a description which has been compared to Catiline's *abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit*,—without troubling Judea again.

Tanitic and Ethiopian dynasties to have been synchronous: M. Bunsen supposes Sethos to have been put instead of Tirhakeh, by some inadvertence of the Greek historian.

‘Sennacherib’s annals do not,’ says Colonel Rawlinson, ‘of course allude to a discomfiture produced by pestilence and panic; but the summary way in which he closes his account of the campaign, merely stating that he returned to Nineveh with his spoil, would be alone sufficient to indicate some disaster to his army. It is also important to add that he was unable during the following year, owing apparently to the severe check he had sustained, to undertake any operations of magnitude, and that, so far as has been yet ascertained, he does not appear at any subsequent period of his reign to have ventured to lead his armies across the Euphrates into Syria. The supposition that the murder of Sennacherib by his sons took place immediately on his return to Nineveh, merely rests on a passage in the apocryphal book of Tobit. The statement in Kings, that he returned to Nineveh ‘and dwelled there,’ indicates a prolonged reign, and the question is now set definitively at rest by our possession of his annals for at least five years subsequent to the Jerusalem catastrophe. The events of the fourth year of Sennacherib present a marked contrast to the detailed and magniloquent descriptions of the preceding periods; they are confined to a few meagre lines, and refer exclusively to an expedition against the Chaldees, undertaken perhaps in order to punish Merodach Baladan for sending ambassadors to Hezekiah, which Sennacherib does not seem even to have conducted in person.’*

I have already shown, at so great length, how the successive events of the War of Freedom affected the minds of the more thoughtful and religious Germans, that I must here content myself with referring the reader to the terms in which Niebuhr maintains that there had never, in any age, been a more signal manifestation of God’s hand, than in their final deliverance ‘when the need was the sorest, when all human wisdom and strength had failed.† The same writer observes, in his Lectures on Roman History ‡, that there are occasional points of time at which the whole course of history, and of the fates of nations, is

* *Outline*, p. 25.

† “The hand of God in Prussia’s deliverance from a foreign yoke,” in Niebuhr’s *Life and Letters*, iii. 115.

‡ Vol. ii. p. p. 146.

decided by some event which does not grow necessarily out of previous events, and which a reasonable man can only explain by referring to the providence of God. Mr. Grote, on the other hand, recognises, but leaves unexplained, such master-events of history. He points out, that if Darius had not — contrary to probable expectation — delayed the first Persian invasion till the Greeks had had twenty years for efficient preparations, they must have been overwhelmed, and Greece, such as it has been to the world, would never have existed; and he draws the general inference, ‘that the history of any nation, considered as a sequence of causes and effects affording applicable knowledge, requires us to study not merely real events, but also imminent contingencies:’* but there he stops. And when Niebuhr takes me a step further, and shows me a ‘*cause* affording applicable knowledge,’ where Mr. Grote only indicated an unexplained ‘effect,’ I must think that Niebuhr’s is the more completely positive criticism — criticism which takes scientific cognisance of all the facts. I could not hear an explanation of the complicated workings of a steam-engine, with its arrangements for supplying its own water, oiling its own wheels, changing vertical to horizontal movements, and so on, and at last admit, that when the hand of the ever-watchful engineer did occasionally intervene to give the machine some new application, or to prevent some hideous crash, this was an inexplicable occurrence — much less pass it in silence, as though its explanation had no interest to a rational man.

* *History of Greece*, iv. 353.

CHAPTER XXI.

ISAIAH XXXVIII.: THE SICKNESS OF HEZEKIAH.—IMPORTANCE OF HIS LIFE TO HIS NATION — HIS DESIRE OF RECOVERY NOT PURELY SELFISH. — FEAR OF DEATH IN OLD TIMES.—CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.—THE SIGN OF THE SHADOW ON THE SUN-DIAL,— TWO ACCOUNTS — THE COTEMPORARY ONE NOT MIRACULOUS. — BIBLE TO BE TREATED LIKE OTHER BOOKS. — NOT SO TREATED BY SCEPTICS.—THE HYMN OF HEZEKIAH.

‘ IN those days was Hezekiah sick unto death.’— It is said that the treatment of plague-boils in the East still corresponds with that prescribed by Isaiah on this occasion; and from this, as well as from the other possible allusions (already noticed) to the existence of pestilence in Jerusalem and in Sennacherib's army, it has been suggested that this deadly sickness was the plague; and that it occurred before the country was freed from the enemy is the natural inference from the words in verse 6., though some commentators maintain the other hypothesis. Either way, the absence of any allusion to the deliverance in Hezekiah's song, is one of those facts which, in historical documents, are so perpetually contradicting our notions of what was likely to have been said or done, and which teach us within what narrow limits all deductive criticisms must be kept, if they are not to become mere speculations of the fancy.

This sickness and recovery of Hezekiah from the gates of death, was an event of such national importance as made it properly find a place here, as well as in the historical books. For the throne of David, as far as we know, was without an heir at this moment; and Hezekiah's death might have been followed by some such interregnum, anarchy, and seizure of the crown by a soldier, as hastened the downfall of the kingdom of Ephraim. Such a failure in the succession, in times of national

depression and disorganisation, would be pregnant with evil even in England now; and we must remember that in Judea then, as in all Eastern and patriarchal governments still, the personal character of the hereditary sovereign was of an importance to the people which it has to a great degree, though not utterly, lost in every country of Europe except Russia. Let us contrast the character and acts of Hezekiah with those of his immediate predecessor and successor, and we shall see of what moment it was that the interval by which his reign separated theirs, should be prolonged fifteen years; and especially when the country needed a hand disciplined by experience, and guided by faith, to recover it from the moral and material disorganisation into which (as we know from Isaiah's discourses) it had fallen during the Assyrian supremacy. And thus this crisis in the personal life of Hezekiah—the fact cannot be denied, though here, as in so many like cases, our philosophy cannot trace out the connection of cause and effect—became the type and symbol of the like crisis in the life of the nation: it, too, was sick unto death, and was granted a new period of life by God, after it was past the help of man.

And therefore it will rather argue our own low moral standard than our understanding of Hezekiah's state of mind, if we see nothing but selfishness and weakness in his lamentations at the prospect of death:—selfishness and weakness we may find there, for in whom are they not found in the hour of extreme suffering? Ever since his accession to the throne, and no doubt long before, Hezekiah had been possessed by the idea that he was called by the LORD to reform and restore the nation: he had been labouring in the work for fourteen years, amidst the greatest difficulties; and now all was to be broken off prematurely; he was neither to be permitted to go on working for the natural 'residue of his years,' nor to hand over a finished task to his children, and thus make known to them the LORD's truth by his life, as well as by words.* These feelings on Hezekiah's part, seem to be recognised in Isaiah's subsequent promise that he should recover: for the promise is from 'the LORD, the God of David his father,' and involves an

* Verse 19.

assurance, not only of his own escape from death, but also that the city as well as himself should be delivered out of the hand of the King of Assyria; and thus reminds him that his life is prolonged, not for his individual merits, not for his individual advantage, but because of God's covenant with the house of David, and that he may fulfil the duties to which that house has been called. If a man has a real work to do in the world, he must lament if it is not permitted him to accomplish it: he will lament, even though he acquiesces in the absolute will of God, and believes that God will accomplish His own good design, even more perfectly, through this apparent frustration of it by the power of nature and circumstances. Moreover, to the saints before the death and resurrection of the LORD, there was also a far greater — nay almost entire — obscurity and gloom over the future. It is difficult, — perhaps, except for a moment, impossible — for us now to realise all they then felt: for in our times a man has either made himself too much a creature of this world to have very deep thoughts on death, or the discovery of their depth and darkness has driven him to find light and life in the clear hope of the Resurrection which the Gospel has made known to us: but we can see from the language of Hezekiah, and from the like expressions in some of the Psalms, that the holiest men of old could not but look on death as a descent into hell; and therefore, though they believed that God was there also, they shrunk instinctively from it, and desired rather to serve Him in the land of the living. We may contrast Hezekiah's language on this occasion with that of St. Paul in his Epistles to the Philippians, and to Timothy.

The corresponding narrative in the Second Book of Kings relates the going back of the shadow on the degrees or steps of Ahaz as a miracle; but the account before us falls within the ordinary laws of Providence and nature, unless we are bound to interpret it by the former. For reasons such as I have urged on other like points throughout this volume, I think we are not so bound: and that on comparing the two documents (that in the Chronicles is so brief as to throw no farther light on the question) by the ordinary methods of historical criticism, we may see that though both the writers believed in

the possibility of miracles, which in their minds were not separated by any marked division from what we now call providential events, yet the cotemporary historian does not describe the occurrence in terms that exclude any explanation but that of miracle, because he described simply and honestly what he or his informant saw, and which in fact was not a miracle : whereas the other, living 200 years or more after the event, introduces the miraculous element into the account by a few transpositions and variations which to him — to whom the miracle is the most obvious, nay the only conceivable, means of understanding the original documents — seem a mere matter of literary compilation and explanation. He is just as simple and honest here, as when he is abstracting the most ordinary fact from the mass of Chronicles before him ; and as unconscious of the change he has wrought, as are the various commentators who, down to the present day, take for granted that the statements in the Kings are a mere supplement to those in Isaiah, without any difference in kind. If we prefer to believe that verses 21. and 22. of the chapter (xxxviii.) before us are a part of the original document added by the author at the end, when he saw that he had omitted the facts they mention, in the proper part of the narrative, the whole occurrence will appear to have been this : — that Hezekiah being dangerously ill, Isaiah, under an impulse which he, like Socrates, recognised to be from God, but which directed the Hebrew prophet what to do, while it only admonished the Greek philosopher what to abstain from, went to warn the king that he must prepare for inevitable death ; and then left him in great trouble at the declaration, and in earnest prayer that his life might be spared. In this grief and prayer, Isaiah both as a patriot and as a personal friend, fully sympathised : and being soon convinced that the LORD had heard their prayers, and that he was empowered to promise Hezekiah recovery instead of death, he returned to announce this new ‘word of the LORD ;’ and to prescribe the medical means which were to be employed in faith of the result. Hezekiah’s grief, as we see in the accompanying record of it, had expressed itself in lamentations that he was cut off from ‘seeing the LORD,’ that is, worshipping Him in His temple at Jerusalem ; and Isaiah’s promise was couched in the form of an

assurance that he should go up to the temple again in two or three days, as we should say.* Hezekiah asked for 'a sign' that the promise would be fulfilled; and then Isaiah referred to a phenomenon which, by a providential coincidence, occurred at the time, but which we know, though they could not, to involve no suspension of the laws of nature.† Dr. Alexander's literal translation of the text (which I give, not only because of his accurate scholarship, but also because he is entirely in favour of the miraculous explanation,) removes all the difficulty which appears from the use of the future verbs in our authorised version. He reads:—"And this to thee the sign from Jehovah, that Jehovah will perform this word which He hath spoken: Behold I (am) causing the shadow to go back, the degrees which it has gone down (*or* which have gone down) on the degrees of Ahaz, with the sun ten degrees backward; and the sun returned ten degrees, on the degrees which it had gone down:" and not only is the statement of the Book of Kings, that the terms of the sign were deliberately chosen by Hezekiah, wholly wanting here, but neither is there anything that requires us to suppose that the sign occurred at the very moment in which Isaiah first directed the remedy of the figs, and promised the king's recovery: the analogy of Isaiah's method of employing and appealing to 'signs' on all other occasions, rather favours the conclusion that neither he nor Hezekiah would have been in such haste; and that they would have thought the phenomenon of the shadow equally a sign and pledge that the promise should hold good, though it did not occur till Hezekiah was already in the way of recovery. And this is the answer which I deferred giving to the question raised by Isaiah's offer to give Ahaz a sign 'either in the depth, or in the height above:'—that I see no reason to suppose that Isaiah would have been able to work a miracle. But I am not equally certain that in his enthusiasm for the cause of the LORD, and his indignation at the heartlessness of Ahaz, he may not have expected that the power would have been given him; though the sign that he chose for himself was not even an extraordinary natural phenomenon, like

* Compare Hosea, vi. 2.

† Vitrina and Gesenius refer to instances of like effects, in modern times, of a refraction caused by some vapour or cloud.

that of the retreating shadow, or the spontaneous crops of wheat. Sciolism, religious or sceptical, may sneer at such conclusions; but I believe they will not be deemed either uncritical or profane, by him who has familiarised his mind with the habits of thought and action of the Hebrew prophets and people, and with the meaning of Revelation, as understood by Paul or Luther.

If we prefer to consider, with some commentators, that verses 21. and 22. are a later addition, we may suppose that Isaiah witnessed the going back of the shadow on the steps of Ahaz, as he went through 'the middle court,' and that he saw in it the sign that their prayers were heard, and thereupon returned to Hezekiah. Whether those verses are a part of the original text or not, it may be possible for Hebrew scholars to decide, when they can divest their minds of certain prejudices, which are hitherto so strongly shown in their conclusions on either side. There still remains the prediction, that Hezekiah should live fifteen years; and which, it is said, compels us still to choose between a miracle and a narrative after the event. I think not: I believe all histories contain coincidences as important and striking, which we never suppose to be miraculous: and it may also be doubted whether 'fifteen' is not a round and definite, put for an indefinite, number; and whether the compilers of the habitually imperfect, and often inaccurate, Hebrew chronologies, may not have calculated the length of Hezekiah's reign from this very statement, assumed to have been literally fulfilled. But even if a slight change in, or addition to, the text, be here the alternative to a miracle, I see less difficulty in the former than in the latter; though I cannot give all the arguments, without writing a complete essay on the miracles of the Old Testament, — which, indeed, is a work much wanted.

Let me, however, notice one probable objection: namely, that in thus unscrupulously applying the ordinary methods of criticism to the scriptural documents before us, we are forgetful of the reverence due to the Bible as God's revelation. It is not reasonable to reply to such objections, that truth is truth, and that an honest inquirer will disregard the consequences to which the pursuit of truth leads him. He is not a rational, if he is an honest, inquirer after truth, who fancies it is to be attained

without that careful verification of his first notions, which can only be effected by bringing these to the test of all facts which properly bear on the subject; and the man who by independent observations and experiences has ascertained the fact that the Bible is the Book of Life and Light, and has a real unity in itself, is not only not unphilosophical if he insists on employing this fact to verify a critical conclusion, as to such a point as we here speak of, but he would be unphilosophical if he were to take any other course. But I appeal confidently to the result, if he, being a reflecting as well as a religious man, does apply this very test. Just as the critical investigation of the works of Herodotus, or Livy, has heightened the respect of real scholars for authors whom the half-informed alone think objects of patronising self-conceit; so a man's reverence for the Bible is helped, and not hindered, when he frankly and clearly recognises the fact, that its documents are not objects of superstitious idolatry, but of manly investigation, and thereby of a respect and reverence such as can never be felt for an idol, by whatever name we may adjure its worshippers. And, as it is often instructive to see ourselves reflected back in those most opposite to us, let us consider that there is a school of thinkers, at the head of whom were Hume and Gibbon in the last age, and who have not less able and learned representatives in our own, who quite accept the dogma that the Bible is *not* to be treated like other books; and that neither for them, nor for those whom their opinions any way influence, is the result reverential for the Bible. And, lastly, I ask the reader who has accompanied me thus far, in my deliberate and avowed plan of treating this book of Isaiah like any other book, what he actually finds to be the result? Does he feel less reverence for it, or for the Book of which it is a part? Does he find that he holds the old Christian faith of his fathers, that this Book is indeed the Word of God, less heartily than he did before?

The questions, of some archæological interest, whether the 'degrees of Ahaz' were a sun-dial introduced by that king with other Assyrian fashions; or only a flight of steps on which a column or other body cast a shadow; or whether it was the latter, expressly devised for a sun-dial; have been discussed with much learning: but as no one conclusion can be

positively preferred, the reader will find it best to examine them at length for himself. It may be worth while to observe, that, in any case, there is no reason for assuming that the degrees were at least half an hour each, and so marked such large divisions of time as would require a refraction of the sun's rays far beyond any that has been witnessed on any other occasion on record.

'The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he was sick, and recovered from his sickness,' is a description (as this title seems exactly to express) of his feelings and thoughts, during the very progress of his illness and cure; verses 10. to 14. describing the former, and verses 15. to 20. the latter. Mortal disease threatened to cut off his days, when their natural course was only at the middle; he found himself suddenly deprived, as by a sentence of punishment, of the rest of his years*; summoned to leave for ever the bright world of life,—which was so pleasant with its human fellowships, and with the presence of the LORD in nature, in providence, in the nation, in the temple-services, and in his own heart,—and to enter the dark gates of the grave, alone, and without the sustaining thought that the LORD had passed them before him.† Like a shepherd's tent, which never remains long in one place, but has its pins hastily pulled up and its covering taken away (the words, says Dathe, implying violent and hasty removal), and leaves the lately busy encampment a silent desert again;—so, says Hezekiah, my generation, the generation of those inhabitants of the world whom I shall behold no more, is departed, or plucked up from me. There seems to be no reason for departing from the proper meaning of the Hebrew word, which is certainly 'generation,'

*

"Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
Che la diritta via era smarrita.
Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura
Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte,
Che nel pensier rinnuova la paura!
Tanto è amara, che poco è più morte."

† "Grant, O Lord . . . that through the grave and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; for His merits who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord."—*Collect for Easter Even.*

but rather the contrary; for the substitution of the image of his generation leaving him, for the thought of his leaving them, is at least as agreeable to the genius of Hebrew poetry, as it evidently would be to that of our own. The tent suggests the weaver's web, and the speaker becomes himself the weaver, cutting off his life from the loom, or, more exactly, the thrum — or threads which join the web to the loom. Perhaps continuing the image of the weaver, he says that during the day he expected that with the arrival of night God would make an end of his life: during the night the fever raged in his bones as though a lion were gnawing at them, and he reckoned it impossible for him to survive beyond the morning; but then again followed the day, with its dull monotonous suffering, so well expressed by the repetition of the words in which it was first described, — 'from day even to night thou wilt make an end of me.' Sometimes his pains made him cry out aloud: at other times, his strength was so low that he could only 'inwardly groan and bemoan himself' (as the elder Lowth explains it): — 'Mine eyes fail with looking upward; O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me.' In contrast with the 'I said,' of verses 10. and 11. stands the 'What shall I say?' with which the psalm passes from the description of his sickness to that of his returning health. The suddenness of his delivery surprises him, so that he wants words to express his thankfulness, and can only say that the LORD hath both spoken to him, and Himself done what He promised. His soul has passed through great bitterness, and he shall remember it, and his deliverance from it, with awe, all the days of his life; — or else, he will go up with reverent joy and thankfulness to the temple ever after; the word being the same as in Psalm xlii. 4. In this time of danger in which God alone could have saved him, he has learnt to understand that men do not live by mere course of nature, but by the word and power of God, and to this Divine care he recognises that his own life is now due. His great and bitter suffering of spirit as well as body is turned into peace; he realises that his sins, of which he had been brought into such fearful consciousness by the approach of death, and of which he felt, as men ever have felt, that death is the consequence and punishment, are forgiven him; and that his LORD has delivered him with the arms of love from the pit

of destruction:—‘Thou hast loved my soul from the pit of destruction,’ as the Hebrew beautifully expresses it. Then with a renewed expression of that strong feeling of the evil of death, and the blessing of life, and with an allusion to his hope of children now that his life is spared—both which we have already noticed—he rises more and more into the language of joy and triumph. ‘The LORD to save me!’ seems to be in the form of a battle-shout; and the ‘songs for stringed instruments,’ to be sung in perpetual service, in the House of the LORD, may be best illustrated by those psalms which are evidently processional and choral, and in some instances, as Psalms cxvi. and cxviii., public thanksgivings after sickness, on occasions like the present. We might, perhaps, attribute the cxviiith, in particular, to Hezekiah himself, and in reference to this sickness.

CHAPTER XXII.

ISAIAH XXXIX.: THE EMBASSY FROM BABYLON. — CHRONICLE OF EUSEBIUS. — BEROSUS. — SENNACHERIB'S ANNALS. — BOOKS OF KINGS AND CHRONICLES — VALUE OF THE LATTER. — THE SIN OF HEZEKIAH. — TRUSTING GOD IN POLITICS. — MODERN HISTORY. — NIEBUHR AND NAPLES. — COLLETTA. — REVERENCE FOR GREAT MEN. — NATIONS AND RULERS RE-ACT ON EACH OTHER. — HEZEKIAH'S RECEPTION OF THE EMBASSY. — ISAIAH'S DENUNCIATION. — 'APRÈS MOI LE DÉLUGE.' — PROSPERITY OF ENGLAND. — RELIGIOUS TEMPER OF OUR STATESMEN. — MR. GLADSTONE.

I HAVE already given the substance of the notices of Merodach-Baladan and his times, which, having been quoted from Berosus by Alexander Polyhistor, came to light a few years ago, in the Armenian version of Eusebius's Chronicle; and also that of the Assyrian Annals themselves, in as far as they are yet deciphered. The former account stands thus:—"After the reign of Sennacherib's brother, Hagisa (or Acises) had possession of the Babylonian government, but was killed by Merodach-Baladan before thirty days had elapsed: and he too, after a reign of six months, was killed, and succeeded by a man named Elibus, in the third year of whose reign Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, marched an army against the Babylonians, defeated them in a pitched battle, sent Elibus and his friends prisoners to Assyria, and made his own son Asordan king of Babylon." The other account is, according to Colonel Rawlinson, that Sennacherib, in the first year of his reign, fought and defeated Merodach-Baladan, whom he seems to have found in independent possession of Babylonia, but who now fled, leaving his country to be subjugated, and put under an Assyrian vice-king 'a man of the name of Bel-adon (Dr. Hincks reads 'Belib'), the son of one of Sennacherib's confidential officers, who had been bred up in his palace': and in the fourth year of Sennacherib's annals—that is, in the year after his campaign in Judea—he relates an expedition against

the Chaldeans, and says, "Merodach-Baladan, whom I had defeated in the course of my first year, fled before my chief officers, and concealed himself in the country of [name lost], which was beyond the sea. His brothers, the offspring of his father's house, whom he had left on this side the sea, together with the men of the country, I ordered to be removed from Beth Yakina [at the mouth of the Euphrates]; the rest of the cities of Merodach-Baladan I destroyed and burned; at the same time I appointed my son Assur Nadin to the government of the country, placing him in a position of independence." The list of Babylonian kings in Ptolemy's canon does but add a third set of discordant notices. The 'son of Sennacherib's confidential officer, bred up in his palace,' may have been his foster-brother, and the same person whom Berosus calls 'his brother:' but I do not pretend to reconcile the accounts. They will not, however, appear more different from each other than we should expect, if we remember that the deciphering of one is as yet more or less tentative, and that we have another at fourth or fifth hand, and with strong evidence of extreme carelessness in the compiler, Eusebius, himself.*

Babylonia, therefore, was at this period alternately a province of Assyria, of such importance that royal princes of the imperial dynasty were appointed its viceroys; and independent of, and in arms against, that power. And the latter was now the case. Merodach-Baladan may have seized the moment of Sennacherib's discomfiture in Judea, to raise his standard again; or at least have seen in that discomfiture an opening for an alliance with the first king whom, as far as we know, Sennacherib had not succeeded in finally reducing to submission. We can hardly doubt that the embassy, whether sent immediately before or after the revolt, was political; and that the congratulations on Hezekiah's recovery, and the inquiry — of particular interest to the Babylonian astronomers — as to the going back of

Berosi Fragmenta. Rawlinson's *Outline*, p. 25. The former is the Armenian version of Eusebius's account of what Polyhistor relates of the Babylonian history which Berosus wrote from the original records.

For a proposed reconciliation of Ptolemy's Canon with Berosus, and of both with the Cuneiform Inscriptions, see Dr. Hincks in the *Irish Transactions*, xxii. 4. 364 ff.

the shadow, were subordinate objects to that of forming an alliance between Babylon and Judah. This, indeed, may be the meaning intended by the mention of the 'letters and present,' which were sent to Hezekiah by Merodach-Baladan. If, however, there were no such specific advances on his part, the spirit of the whole transaction is not the less clear, especially on comparison of the parallel account in the Book of Chronicles. The author of the Chronicles gives predominance to the ecclesiastical, as the author of the Kings does to the civil, side of their national history: he is extravagantly censured and depreciated by some modern critics, not only for want of precision, but for prejudice and partiality — as in omitting such unfavourable facts as the idolatries of Solomon; but even if it be not enough to say in reply, that he refers his readers to then existing records for 'all the rest' of the events which he thus warns them he does not give, and if we must admit him to have had the commonest failing of all historians, we shall lose not only many important facts, but also much indispensable light upon those of the other historical books, if we reject his help. Events which the original chroniclers would have narrated without explanation, because they were sufficiently intelligible of themselves to cotemporaries, he amplifies with explanations of their causes; and he thus illustrates things which a different state of mental development, as well as of outward circumstances, had made obscure to his own readers, and would, but for his aid, be obscure to us who, if we have more pretensions to philology and philosophy than he, have no longer all his sources of information. Thus he here throws light on the brief statements of Isaiah and the Book of Kings, by his account of the great prosperity of Judah after the overthrow of Sennacherib, and the way in which the friendship of her king was consequently courted by the neighbouring states; by his pointing out that in the king's manner of receiving those overtures he represented the general feeling of his people, so that his act was properly national and productive of national consequences; and by his calling our attention to the pregnant truth, that this act was but a first manifestation of what was already their settled state of mind and heart, and which would therefore assuredly exhibit itself, not merely in this isolated expression, but

in the whole subsequent career of the nation, until the state of mind itself was changed. And he explains what this state of mind was, in the words — ‘Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up; therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem: notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.’ Here was the old, deep-seated, vice re-appearing in a form adapted to the new circumstances of the time. The Hebrew nation — as indeed every other, now not less than then — could only stand by faith in its unseen yet ever-present King, and conscientious obedience to His laws: they had quite forgotten this, not for the first time, during the prosperous reign of Uzziah, and had ceased to trust in anything but their own power and wealth, and the settledness of their institutions: when these failed them, during the long years of Assyrian supremacy and invasion, they tried with no better success their systems of political alliances, intrigues, and counterpoises, in which Hebrew craft was to outwit barbarian force: and now when it might have been hoped that all this severe discipline had taught them how vain was their trust in either the one or the other, it needed but an opportunity — ‘God’s leaving them to try them, that they might know all that was in their heart’ — to prove that both king and people were ready to fall back on the old courses, so superficially had the lesson been learnt, and so immediately forgotten. Instead of keeping steadily in view the fact, that their deliverance from Assyria was wrought by God, after all their own schemes had completely failed, and adhering to the simple, straightforward, conduct which that fact pointed to, they were taking credit to themselves for the deliverance, and proposing, or accepting the proposal of, a new system of heathen alliances. In these, Judah was probably to be the patroness, and not the patronised: and the foreign policy which had been so ruinous in the hands of Ahaz, Shebna, and the kings of Samaria, was to be made successful by a combination with that of the powerful Uzziah, and such as he might have adopted, had he not lived before the rise of the late Assyrian domination. The fear which characterised the

previous policy, was now somewhat modified with pride ; but the spirit was the same : for it was the spirit which has no faith that, when a man or a nation keeps the plain road of duty and honesty, the consequences may be expected without anxiety ; and which, therefore, substitutes for such adherence to duty, some of those schemes by which mere worldly, godless, politicians are still, as in old times, ever striving to compass their ends, whether the subversion, or the restoration, of a dynasty or a party, or the acquisition, or the preventing of others from acquiring, a territory or an office ; but which at last brings them to the inevitable condition which Shakspeare describes as their fate, in words so significant as to be worth quoting a second time : — ‘ A politician, a man that would circumvent God, o’er-officed by an ass.’

The spirit of such policy is worldly and godless ; but if we will study it, and what the Bible reveals concerning it, for our own profit, we must look how it works still, as of old, in the religious and patriotic, and not in the merely selfish : — in the Hezekiahs rather than in the Shebnas. And though the quiet, legal, course of modern English politics, does not supply the most obvious illustrations of the eternal laws which govern it ; yet these are as steadily at work with us as with other nations — only a little closer observation is necessary. A greater difficulty lies in the fire which still smoulders under the dead-looking ashes, on which he must tread who meddles with cotemporary history : and, therefore, it is with hesitation that I suggest, that we may find a counterpart of Hezekiah’s want of faith in the future guidance of the God who had led him through the past, in the repressive policy which our statesmen adopted, and so many of our patriots approved, after the peace of 1815. A large part of the best men of that day, seem to have lost all clear belief that the God who had just delivered Europe from a mightier incarnation of sheer, arbitrary, force than Sennacherib’s, had any farther work for His Englishmen *,

* “ Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, even to the reforming of reformation itself. What does he then, but reveal himself to his servants, and, as his manner is, first to his English-

and that He only required them still to mark and follow the method of His counsels. They retained their faith in the ideal beauty of freedom and progress, — just as Hezekiah no doubt retained his faith: but in a temper essentially analogous, though different in form, to that which prompted the alliance of Judah with Merodach-Baladan, they renounced, for all practical purposes, both their youthful love of freedom, and their maturer reverence for constitutional rights: and they avowed that, while their hopes for the future were utterly dim, their present trust was in the vulgarest expedients of police-craft; and in resistance to the reforms which in the abstract they admitted to be desirable, but in the demand for which they would see nothing but man's sedition, instead of the signs by which God was pointing to the forward road. And to come down lower, and still nearer home: — Which of us does not know, has not felt, how in the eagerness of political partisanship religious men will practise, and even justify, the unprincipled support of bad ministers, or adherents of ministers in parliament, or at elections? Who has not heard men, whose private morality, and even piety, is above all suspicion, defend bribery and corruption at the last elections, and the voting for a fool, or a knave, in preference to a wise and honest man, because it was in the cause of his party? Who has not felt the temptation to do the like?

Though I share the ordinary belief of my countrymen, as to the causes of the late European revolutions, and also as to the conduct of the several kings and governments since the recovery of their power, I think it so impossible to speak of the internal politics of a foreign nation without misapprehensions and blunders, that I refrain from making the obvious applications which would otherwise be here at hand: yet, as I have illustrated a former part of my text at so great length from Niebuhr's pictures of his own, and his countrymen's, condition and temper during the War of Freedom, I must point to the last — only too faithful — resemblance between the two stories.

men? — I say, as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of his counsels, and are unworthy."—Milton's *Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*.

Already, in 1815, Niebuhr had begun to lament that 'the first war did them no harm, but that was conducted in a different spirit from the present one:' and in 1819, after the description already quoted, of what might have been, when 'the ground was cleared,' &c., he says, — 'No seed was sown, and so of course weeds shot up in rank luxuriance: nothing can exonerate those who neglected their duty at that time, from the blame of these results: . . . the tone of public feeling has degenerated, and God knows how it is to be raised.' And, sadder still, we find the religious and philosophic statesman himself, fallen under the same unbelief in God's methods. He still loved law and liberty as they appeared in past history, or as he conceived of their restoration out of mediæval institutions: but the actual process by which alone God will have law, and liberty, and the various forms of human progress, developed, was too rough, and too soiled with hard and unskilful struggles, to be tolerable to him: he not only disliked it, as he did the organisation of armies and police for the ends of despotism, but he was glad to employ these to put it down. Few things are more painful, few more instructive, to him who has studied the laws of political society by help of this great man's works, than that story of the course Niebuhr took when the Austrian army was at Rome, on its way to Naples. He might urge that the Neapolitans had not developed a constitution out of their old municipalities, which were most probably too effete for any such purpose; that, with that fatal habit of Italy, whether conqueress or conquered, they had gone for their new polity to Spain, which, indeed, had given them the one good ruler whom they had known for centuries; and that though their parliament did represent the majority, at least, of the possessors of property and intelligence throughout the country, it worked but indifferently: but a Frenchman in Napoleon's time would have produced as plausible arguments for assisting Prussia by external interference, as could be adduced for meddling now with Naples. Yet Niebuhr, who, some five or six years before, could feel and write as we have seen, when the question was between France and Prussia, was now so eager to tread out the first poor spark of Italian liberty, that when the Austrian army was detained for want of funds, he (being Prussian minister at Rome), with-

out waiting for the directions of his government, pledged its credit with the Roman bankers, and so enabled the invading army to march on Naples without a moment's delay.* 'There and thus,' as the Neapolitan historian says, 'was a great deed of that policy of power which modern kings and governments trust in, consummated against a people too feeble and too little wise to resist.' He adds, 'that this, as every other like event, bears witness of the truth, which he will lose no opportunity of proclaiming, that neither revolutions nor despotisms will in the end avail anything; but that the social culture and elevation of the whole people is the only effective instrument of worthy and durable political reforms, the only real governing power, and that to it must the nations direct their hopes and their acts.'

* There is apparently an expression of surprise, as well as of disapproval, at the natural consequences of the foreign interposition which Niebuhr had thus aided, in the following extract from a letter of his to Chevalier Bunsen, dated from Naples two years after that event: — "It appears that new proscriptions are beginning, and that *lettres d'exil* have come from Vienna. An officer has been ordered to leave the country, without even having been brought to any trial." — *Niebuhr's Life and Letters*, vol. III. p. lv.

In Chevalier Bunsen's defence of the political opinions and character of Niebuhr, which is prefixed to this volume, and in reference to the point on which I have here ventured (not unbecomingly, I trust) to avow my dissent from the writer, he says—after stating the fact of Niebuhr's anticipation of his government's instructions to assist the Austrians—that their army, "in spite of the rapidity of its movements, never could get in sight of an enemy, not even in the impregnable pass of Androdoco." But high as this statesman's authority is in any matter of history, ancient or modern, it is perhaps scarcely higher, on a point of cotemporary Neapolitan history, than that of Colletta; and Colletta states, in substance, that the Neapolitan army and general, carried away by the undisciplined enthusiasm of raw levies, not only attacked the Austrians, instead of remaining on the defensive as prudence dictated, but attacked without ordinary caution. They advanced from the heights of Androdoco in two columns, and attempted to take Rieti, where the Austrians were posted, with the first of these columns, before the other could arrive to its support. They were met by no such ill-directed measures; and the Neapolitan army of 'civilians, unacquainted with war,' was soon thrown into confusion: a charge of Hungarian cavalry completely broke them; and with a panic as universal as their previous courage, they fled and utterly dispersed: so that the Austrians, who advanced cautiously on the third day after, found the heights of Androdoco, and the whole frontier, open to them, and without further resistance reached Naples, and restored the absolute power of Ferdinand I. '*Storia del Reame di Napoli*, ix. 10. 32.

And when I read these words of the man who was carried prisoner to Austria, and died in exile, for the part he had taken in the constitutional government of this his own country; when I consider that, whatever the defect, or positive evil, of some other elements of that government, it also contained, in the germ at least, these doctrines of Colletta, and that the wisdom and influence of himself, and of those who thought and acted with him, were there, to develope these germs, if time and opportunity had been allowed; when I remember that, bad or good, it was the government of the nation's own choice; when I look at these things, and then think that it was Niebuhr who urged and aided the Austrian troopers, in crushing Naples under their hoofs, and so leaving it at the mercy of a power worse than that from which his own country had been delivered; I cannot but conclude, in the words of the Bible, 'He rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him.'

It may be said, that in thus laying bare the faults of men who are not only wise and good, but among the teachers from whom we must ourselves learn wisdom and goodness, if at all, I disturb the reverence of others, while I contradict my own professions of it:—but I think not justly. The characters of the wise and good who have departed from us, are our own most precious heritage; and we are bound by all considerations of duty, as well as interest, not only to prize them at the true value of all the good that they contain, and offer us, for our use, but also to free them from those stains which nothing human is, or can be, free from: and this we must do, not by justifying or even excusing the fault, but by frank—I might fitly say, penitent—avowal of it. This is what each of us, in his humbler sphere, would desire to have done for him: it is thus that the Bible, as we see in the very case before us, treats its heroes and examples: it does not sanction idol-worship, nor admit that there is, or can be, any real reverence in superstition.

The state of nations and their rulers act and re-act upon each other. Hezekiah sank under the influence of the general demoralisation, and really shared in it; and then, by expressing it thus publicly in act, he confirmed it in the people. If he could have risen entirely above that influence, he would

have done much more towards delivering the nation from it but we must not forget how very much he actually did, even though we suspect from his conduct on the present occasion, that he may not have been always so opposed to the policy of Shebna, as Isaiah was.

Hezekiah's reception of the illustrious strangers has been compared with that of Solon by Cræsus, — *τὸν Σόλῳνα θεράποντες περιήγον κατὰ τοὺς θησαυροὺς καὶ ἐπιδείκνυσαν πάντα ἔόντα μεγάλα τε καὶ ὄλβια.* — 'He was glad of them,' and showed them his arsenals, palaces, treasures, and curious and rare things, among which last may have been included 'the spices and the precious ointment:' or else these may have been specimens of the valuable products of 'his dominion' or realm, as we know Jericho and Gilead were famous for their balsam, and that Hoshea sent oil, as a present or tribute, to Egypt. It can hardly be thought improbable that Isaiah was purposely left in ignorance of all these things; and that the king's uneasy consciousness of what the prophet's judgment would be, is indicated in his reply that the ambassadors came from a far country, as though he would make his hospitality seem a duty; and in the reluctance with which he confesses that country to be Babylon. Isaiah saw at once into the heart of the matter. It was not long before that he had spoken thus to Hezekiah: — 'Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years: and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city:' — and in this reference to the covenant with David and his line, and to the city, or nation, of which he was the head in right of David, Hezekiah had seen a promise that the line should not fail with himself. And now, this is Isaiah's message: — 'Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD: and of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.' Hezekiah's reply expressed neither the highest magnanimity, nor the mere selfish egotism which some commentators have seen in it;

but a mixture of feelings in accordance with all that we know of his character. His appreciation of his position and duties as a king, is shown in his restoration of the national worship, and his final resistance to Sennacherib, as well as in his general and successful care for the prosperity of his country. But though a religious sense of duty, or the pressure of necessity, could occasionally stir him to master circumstances by a great effort, we may infer from the domination of Shebna, and from his own demeanour and language when supplicating Sennacherib's pardon; after the receipt of Rab-shakeh's message, and of Sennacherib's letter; in the time of his own sickness; and on the present occasion; that his natural and habitual disposition was rather to submit to the guidance of circumstances, with a gentle and pious confession that this weakness of his character was beyond cure, and to accept the consequences with pious and affectionate resignation to God's will, and thankful acknowledgment of any mitigation of them. He could enter into the meaning of the Psalmist's words, 'Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though Thou tookest vengeance on their inventions:' and though he had not, like Moses or Paul, the stern courage which could ask that the punishment might be to himself, and the forgiveness to his people; but on the contrary was thankful to learn that there should 'be peace and truth in his days;' it must not be overlooked that it was peace and truth to his country as well as himself, and not merely selfish security, that he was thankful for. For this distinguishes his case, and the case of those who in times of personal or public calamity feel and act, because they are, like Hezekiah, from that expressed in the sentiment — devoid alike of religious thankfulness and patriotic sympathy — that 'things will last my time.' The sentiment is, indeed, in one respect the same in each case; it expresses the natural, and therefore as far as nature is concerned, the inevitable, selfishness consequent on the expectation of calamities beyond resistance; and the opportunity which the late European revolutions have given us of studying it close at hand, though happily not in our own country, enables us, not only to understand its character better, but to think more charitably of those who succumb under it, than we otherwise could have done. But though nature is always alike under like circumstances, it may, or it may not

be raised above itself by a spirit and a power higher than its own. Grace can inspire and transfigure, without destroying, nature, and reflect itself even in the infirmities and defects of nature: and then, instead of the worldly ‘Après moi le déluge,’ we have the pious ‘Good is the word of the LORD; for there shall be peace and truth in my days.’ The corresponding Greek and Latin phrases — *ἐμοῦ θανόντος, γαῖα μυχθήτω πυρί*, and *mihi mortuo omnes mortui sunt*, — are quoted by Alexander from Calvin. Another phase of the temper they express, has been already considered, where we had it described by Isaiah as that of the worldly men of Jerusalem.

We too, like Hezekiah and his people, have ‘exceeding much riches and honour, cities and treasures, and storehouses; corn, and wine, and oil, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God has given us substance very much:’ and we too are exposed to the same temptations as they; and our nation, like theirs, may at any time fall under its power, and become obnoxious to its consequences and punishment. The warning example should never be absent from our thoughts; for there is no one, even the humblest of us, who is not taking a real part in the workings of our commonwealth, and influencing its destiny for good or evil; and that whether he will or not. There is much to fear for England; yet much to hope also: much to be hopeful in, as well as thankful for, in the manifest and increasing spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, in the fear of the LORD, which God is giving to our public men. The religious temper of so large a proportion of our statesmen, and their ever-rising moral standard of conduct in affairs, show so great a contrast with the low, vulgar, worldliness of more than one preceding generation, that it is already almost as if the sun were rising upon us through the thick darkness. And not the least promising among the signs of our happy times, is the personal character of him whom the many recognise now, as the few have long done, as marked out to be our First Minister within the next ten years: who, while he possesses all the working powers of an English statesman, unites a more than ordinary readiness to look out for, and discern, the indications of God’s plans and purposes, with a more than ordinary bravery in following these at the sacrifice of that temporary

applause, at the cost of that temporary blame, which the unthinking and the prejudiced multitude for the time attach to what they call inconsistency, but which the wise hail as enlightened progress. It may be suspected, that many of the ecclesiastical, or even civil, opinions of this statesman, are not held by the author of these pages: but my aim has been, not to advocate opinions, but to elucidate a method, — the method, namely, which recognises the government of a nation to be a problem too vast and complicated to be brought within the grasp of any one finite intellect; yet a problem which is in itself rational, a deliberate design in God's counsels, and of which the statesman for the time being may always understand so much as the practical needs of the time require, and so much as will properly prepare the way for the next, as yet unindicated, step, provided that his judgment is enlivened by a God-fearing conscience, as well as enlightened by a cultivated intellect, and that he walks in the humility of wisdom, and not in the pride of self-sufficiency. The men who repealed the corn-laws, could not foresee the revolutions of 1848, which we might not have escaped so easily if those laws had been then in existence: the men, who, during the previous ten or twelve years, have been laying deep and broad foundations for the moral and mental elevation of the working classes, could not foresee that the same revolutions, and the discovery of the gold regions with all its consequences, would open to those classes the road to so increasing a share of political power, as must end in the overthrow of our constitution, if they were to continue in their uneducated condition: but in the one case and the other there were sufficient indications to him who looked at the moral, as well as to the merely calculable, signs, and asked his conscience what was right, as well as his understanding what was wise. I will conclude this chapter with a passage from Mr. Gladstone, which, though little known, is worthy of Milton, or of Burke, for eloquence and constitutional philosophy, and not unconnected with the subjects we have been considering.

“ Miserable indeed would be the prospect of the coming times, if we believed that authority and freedom were simply conflicting and contradictory elements in the constitution of a community, so that whatever is given to the one must be de-

ducted from the other. But no Briton, who has devoted any portion of his thoughts to the history of his country, or the character of its inhabitants, can for a moment be ensnared into that, for him, false and degrading belief. It has been providentially allotted to this favoured isle that it should show to all the world, how freedom and authority, in their due and wise developements, not only may co-exist in the same body, but may, instead of impairing, sustain and strengthen one another. Among Britons, it is the extent and security of freedom which renders it safe to entrust large powers to Government, and it is the very largeness of those powers and the vigour of their exercise, which constitute, to each individual of the community, the great practical safeguard of his liberties in return. The free expression of opinion, as our experience has taught us, is the safety-valve of passion. That noise, when the steam escapes, alarms the timid; but it is the sign that we are safe. The concession of reasonable privilege anticipates the growth of furious appetite. Regularity, combination, and order, especially when joined with publicity, have of themselves a marvellous virtue; they tend to subordinate the individual to the mass, they enlarge by healthy exercise the better and nobler parts of our nature, and depress the poorer and meaner; they make man more a creature of habits, and less of mere impulse; they weaken the relative influence of the present, by strengthening his hold upon the future and the past, and their hold upon him. By gathering, too, into organised forms the various influences that bear sway in a mixed community, and leaving them to work within prescribed channels, those which are good acquire the multiplied strength of union, while the bad neutralise one another by reciprocal elimination. It is a great and noble secret, that of constitutional freedom, which has given to us the largest liberties, with the steadiest throne, and the most vigorous executive, in Christendom. I confess to my strong faith in the virtue of this principle. I have lived now for many years in the midst of the hottest and noisiest of its workshops, and have seen that amidst the clatter and the din a ceaseless labour is going on; stubborn matter is reduced to obedience, and the brute powers of society, like the fire, air, water, and mineral of nature, are with clamour indeed, but also with might, educated

and shaped into the most refined and regular forms of usefulness for man. I am deeply convinced, that among us all systems, whether religious or political, which rest on a principle of absolutism, must of necessity be, not indeed tyrannical, but feeble and ineffective systems; and that methodically to enlist the members of a community, with due regard to their several capacities, in the performance of its public duties, is the way to make that community powerful and healthful, to give a firm seat to its rulers, and to engender a warm and intelligent devotion in those beneath their sway.”*

* *Letter to the Right Rev. W. Skinner, D.D., on the Functions of Laymen in the Church*, pp. 15, 16.

The reader may compare Mr. Roebuck's description of the operation of the “immense safety-valve of parliamentary debate” in November, 1830; and his contrast between the French and English methods of enforcing opinions; in his *History of the Whig Ministry*, vol. i. p. 345. 356.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ISAIAH XL—LXVI.: QUESTION OF THE GENUINENESS OF THE LAST CHAPTERS OF ISAIAH. — PSEUDO-ISAIAH HYPOTHESIS. — THE NAME OF CYRUS. — CORESH, AND THE LORD'S SERVANT. — MODERN EXPLANATIONS. — MÖLLER'S INTERPRETATION. — DOUBTS AND CERTAINITIES. — THE POSITIVE METHOD. — COHERENCE OF EARLIER AND LATER PROPHECIES. — THE EARLIER NOT FILLED AS ISAIAH HAD EXPECTED. — ENLARGEMENT OF HIS VIEWS. — FINITE AND INFINITE IDEALS. — FACTS FOR INDUCTION AS TO THE NATURE OF PROPHECY. — NOTE ON STRAUSS, AND THE APPLICATION OF POSITIVE CRITICISM TO CHRISTIANITY.

WE are now arrived at the question, whether the last twenty-six chapters of the Book which bears the name of Isaiah, on a title-page which has come down to us as a part of the text itself, were really written by him, or by an otherwise unknown prophet, living towards the end of the Captivity. And let us, at the outset, make it quite clear to our minds, that the point at issue is, whether the actual text is hopelessly corrupt, spurious beyond doubt; and not whether a very ingenious, elaborate, and plausible substitute for that text, may not be conveniently adopted by us, even though no such spuriousness has been made out.

The argument then—I state it as strongly as I can—for believing the text to be spurious, is this: That while the writer prophesies the restoration of the Jews as a future event, he seems, as of course, and in the manner not of a prophet, but of a cotemporary, to recognise the captivity, and the events which we know from history to have then occurred, as the state of things in which he was actually living. Micah, in the days of Hezekiah, foretold that ‘Zion should be ploughed like a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest; that the daughter of Zion should go to Babylon, and that there the LORD should redeem her from the hand of her enemies:’*—but let us fairly compare the tone of

* Micah, iii. 12. iv. 10.

these words with the following: 'That saith to Jerusalem, thou shalt be inhabited, and to the cities of Judah, ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof; that saith to the deep be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built, and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid: '*—and by the side of both these passages let us put the opening words of Ezra's narrative: 'Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, the LORD God of Heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah: who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is the God), which is in Jerusalem: '—And then do we not see how different the tone of the first passage is from that of the second, and how like that of the second to the third? The name of Cyrus is repeated in the xlvth chapter of Isaiah: and in the lxivth we have the words, 'Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation, our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste;' while the rest of the chapter is an appeal to the LORD to put an end to this miserable condition of His people, and is thus one of several instances in which that condition—the actual and now long existing captivity—is assumed in a way which unprejudiced criticism, it is urged, must admit to be historical, not prophetic.

The subsidiary arguments, drawn from the style of writing, and especially from the presence of certain words or idioms, have been considered in Chapter IX.: only I may remark, that Gesenius now unintentionally supports the view there taken. For though he gives a list of fifteen supposed modern words and usages, he throws great doubt on the possibility of distinguishing

* Isaiah, xlv. 26.

between fancy and fact in the matter, when he says that the Hebrew literature of the date of the exile is so free from any *strong* Chaldaic colouring, as to account for the reluctant admission of Eichorn and Bertholdt that they could find none in these latter chapters; and when he allows that the resemblances of style between these and the unquestioned works of Isaiah are such as he can best explain by supposing that the two were harmonised by an editor, he inevitably suggests that they might have been modernised in the same way. I believe the matter-of-fact investigator will come to the conclusion, that the first argument is that in which the real strength of the case lies; and that its main source and support is the word 'Cyrus,' just as the word 'Babylon' was on another occasion. Whatever is the difficulty from the historical tone of those passages I have quoted or referred to, its vitality is in this name; for as long as we have no really satisfactory explanation of its presence in a prophecy by Isaiah, we must allow it to give its own historical character to the context; but if such an explanation were found, that context, and all its difficulties, would at once become so many facts from which to draw a more complete induction as to the nature of Hebrew prophecy.

But whatever may be the adequate explanation which we need, I am unable to admit that it is afforded by the hypothesis of the late date of these chapters. An examination of particulars shows that, whatever we must grant of detached passages, the general matter of the discourse is not that of a Jew living in Babylon in the time of the Captivity, but of a prophet in Jerusalem, depicting the scene in vision; and depicting it in the very manner of Isaiah, whose habits of thought, as well as language, we recognise perpetually, and to whose times and position some passages are most suitable, and some directly allude. Such are the comparison of Zion to a bride whose name shall be Hephzibah, which was the name of Hezekiah's wife, and the mother of his heir*; the words of comfort to the eunuchs†, compared with the prediction of the lot of the royal family‡; the argument from the ritual sacrifices, which has no meaning if addressed to those to whom it was no longer possible to perform the temple-

* lxii. 4.

† lvi. 3.

‡ xxxix. 7.

service because there was no temple * ; and the description † of Zion, whose watchmen are dumb and drunken, and her righteous men taken away by death, while she, the sorceress and harlot, sends her messengers and presents to the king afar off, and debases herself to hell :— words which make us think, on the one hand, of Isaiah's former denunciations of the national idolatries, the worldly princes and prophets, their persecutions, their ' covenants with death and hell,' the embassy to Egypt, and the alliance with Merodach-Baladan ; and on the other, of the historian's description of the reign of Manasseh, when these national crimes were reproduced in their wonted forms, and would have been already foreseen by the prophet. The argument of the whole passage, of which that very description of Coresh ‡, as the rebuilder of the destroyed temple, is a part, loses all effective sense unless it be taken as the utterance of a prophet in some previous age, and not of a cotemporary of Cyrus. For it maintains that the LORD'S Godhead is proved by his ability to govern the world according to a previous plan, and that the fact of this previous plan is shown by its announcement beforehand, ' declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done : ' and if this declaration was not really made from ancient times, but only when the events were so near that ordinary intelligence would expect them, the passage before us either has a meaning too vapid for us readily to accept it as the only conclusion from premises of so much intellectual power, or else the writer intended to pass it off on his cotemporaries as an ancient prophecy, by a pious fraud not less

* xliii. 22- 28., in the last verse of which the verbs are future in the original.

† lvi. 9.—lvii. 11. Ewald admits that this passage must have been written while the kingdom of David still existed, and is exactly suited to the times of Manasseh ; from which, he says, there is no doubt (' es leidet bei näherer Ansicht keinen Zweifel ') that the ' unnamed ' prophet, writing in the days of the exile, has quoted from an older prophet, because he could hardly have said any thing better of his own :— an instructive specimen of the way in which the speculative criticism makes facts to supply the place of the historical ones it has thrown aside.

‡ The same Hebrew word as stands for Cyrus in Ezra, Chronicles, and Daniel.

irreconcilable with his high moral tone. Moreover, the resemblance, which is thought to be so striking between the description of Coresh in the words before us, and the historical accounts of the Persian king, is not the whole case. For plausible as it seems to understand one 'called, and named, by the God of Israel, though he has not known Him,' to be a heathen, though providential, instrument of Israel's deliverance: yet these expressions, and still more their context, are so like, or even identical with, those of a number of other passages which it requires the utmost forcing to apply to Cyrus, that if the former are decided to indicate a contemporary Persian king — or indeed any other than a national Personage — the latter become an inextricable puzzle: and the commentators are never able to agree whether they refer to Cyrus, to Israel, or to the Messiah. This will be shown more clearly by some instances: —

CORESH.

That saith to Coresh, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built, and to the temple, thou shalt be founded:

Thus saith the LORD to his Anointed, to Coresh, whose right hand I have holden:

To tread down nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings:

ISRAEL: THE LORD'S SERVANT.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. xl. 11. Thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob. . . . I will give thee for a covenant to the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages . . . their pastures shall be in all high places. xlix, 6—9. I have created him for my glory. Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. xlix. 3.

Behold my servant whom I uphold, I have put my spirit upon him. xlii. 1. The spirit of the LORD God is upon me because the LORD hath anointed me. lx. 1. I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. xli. 10. I the LORD have called thee . . . and will hold thine hand. xlii. 6.

I have made of thee a sharp threshing instrument. xli. 15. Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship. xlix. 7.

I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places:

That thou mayest know that I, the LORD which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel:

For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me:

I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor for reward.

If the reader considers not only these instances, but the whole tone and spirit of their context; and not least, the use of the phrase 'His Anointed,' which, with one very doubtful exception, is appropriated to the kings, prophets, priests, and patriarchs of the chosen nation of Israel; I think he will agree with me, that all this interchange and fusion of thoughts and images are utterly inexplicable in the mouth of a Jewish prophet of any age. No one could have attributed to a heathen king the character of the Messiah, and even of the LORD of Israel Himself.

Again, we need an explanation of the anomaly that a ge-

I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. xlii. 16. Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles. lxi. 6.

I have called thee by thy name I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel. xliii. 1. 3.

Thou Israel art my servant thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof. xli. 9. Who is blind, but my servant, or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? xlii. 19. I said, behold, behold me, to a nation that was not called by my name. lxv. 1. I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not. xlii. 16.

That they might be called, Trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD they shall build the old wastes the former desolations the waste cities I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them Behold his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. lxi. 3, 4. 8., lxii. 11.

nus not inferior to that of Isaiah should appear in a period when Hebrew literature had nearly arrived at its extinction, through a gradual decay, the stages of which are as easily traceable as those of any other nation; and that having appeared, his name and personality should have been lost, when those of Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah were preserved. And, lastly, it must be objected to the hypothesis of the non-genuineness of these chapters, that they leave Isaiah's character an inexplicable puzzle. Such a man as his unquestioned works show him to have been, would not have been content with the desponding though pious resignation of Hezekiah: nature would indeed have 'told her first lie in her noblest creature,' if Isaiah could thus terminate his fifty years' ministry. But though we might expect that a system of criticism which professes to follow the guidance of the known laws of nature and the human mind, instead of the arbitrary dogmas of theology, would at least have suggested that death might have prematurely closed the prophet's career, at the moment when he had been compelled to destroy with his own hands the work of his life; its advocates on the contrary tell us that he has left us one piece of a later date than his denunciation of Hezekiah's sin, — namely, the prophecy against Egypt, in which he repeats his old promises, just as if they had never been proved nugatory. They do indeed say that he was a very old man when he wrote it.

Now, though objections of this sort (with the exception of one to which we must return), are worth nothing against the genuineness of a text which has the fact of historical existence in its favour, they are not unimportant when they stand in the way of our accepting a conjectural emendation of that text. For the first essential of such an emendation is, that it shall be itself free from all internal difficulty, and so far thoroughly suitable for taking the place of what is not capable of explanation, as it stands. And therefore, after applying these and the like tests to the extent of my ability, I am compelled (though not without a painful sense of presumption, and a wish that some more competent man had been put on the service) to conclude, and pronounce, that this theory of the non-genuineness of these chapters, and of their date being that of the cap-

tivity, is untenable: that, in the language of Bacon*, the ‘original notions’ (as to the nature of prophecy) on which it rests, are ‘vitiating, confused, hastily abstracted from things, vague, not clearly defined and limited; and the secondary notions’ (as to the style, late date, &c.) ‘formed no less rashly;’ so that the result itself ‘is not well put together, nor justly formed, but resembles a magnificent structure that has no foundation.’ Magnificent I will not deny it to be: in this respect it probably ranks next after the great master-piece of our age, in this kind—‘The Life of Jesus,’ by Strauss†: and the one, like the other, is so elaborate for its learning and rhetoric, and so coherent for its logic, that it requires a rather stringent application of the Baconian torture, or Socratic cross-examination, before a man can drive home the question, What meaning, what realities, lie under these grand concatenations of words? and so elicit the answer—NONE. But if we do contrive to ‘renounce our notions, and begin to form an acquaintance with things,’ we shall, I believe, find that we are here dealing with one of those idols—idols at once for their illusive non-reality, and for the superstitious devotion they receive—which, Bacon warns us, ‘beset the human mind,’ and can only be ‘expelled’ by ‘true induction.’ And while we might trace, in the scheme before us, some features of each of his four kinds of idols, it may perhaps be especially designated as an ‘idol of the theatre,’ a ‘play brought out and performed, creating a fictitious and theatrical world.’

But this disposes, not of our difficulty, but of one unsatisfactory solution of it. Let us then examine the arguments of those who maintain the genuineness of the text. The old, orthodox, explanation which we find, as the received one, in Josephus, is that the mention of Cyrus is a miraculous prediction: but though this is still asserted to be the true solution by many of the most recent commentators; and though they urge, with some force, that if a miracle were ever possible, this was no unworthy occasion for one, and that the prophet’s own words declare as much; yet they show that they feel the difficulty which their opponents avow; and they do, in fact, abandon the

* *Instauratio Magna*, pp. 1. 12. 386. ff. Aph. xiv. xvi. xxiii. xxxix. (Bohn.)

† See note at the end of the Chapter.

old position, when they suppose themselves to be only fortifying it with another, collateral, explanation. This is, that the name of Cyrus, which most modern philologists, like the Greek historians, derive from the Persian word for 'Sun,' was a Persian title, analogous to those of the Egyptian Pharaoh and Ptolemy, the Philistian Abimelech, the Amalekitish Agag, and the Roman Cæsar; and that it was known as such to Isaiah, either from Persian travellers or the Medes in Sennacherib's army, so that he would have meant no more than Jeremiah expresses by 'The LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes:'—that this explanation is confirmed by the statement of Herodotus and Strabo, that Cyrus had another name before he ascended the throne; and by the fact that a much later Persian king, Bahram, was surnamed Kur:—and that it is possible that the royal author of the proclamation given by Ezra may have adopted the title the more readily from the mention of it in these prophecies of Isaiah, which, according to Josephus, were shown him by the Jews.* This conjecture that Cyrus was a royal title, and not an individual name, is, moreover, supported by the evidence (quoted from Burnouf by Hävernick†) that some such title as Coresh, taken to mean the sun, was very widely extended among the Arian races, and adopted both by Persian and Indian dynasties: and Colonel Rawlinson's opinion may be adduced on the same side; for while he doubts the connection between Coresh, or Kurush, and Khūr (the Persian for 'sun'), he 'compares the former with the Sanskrit Kūrūh or Kūrūs, which was probably a popular title among the Arian race before the separation of the Median and Persian branches,' and adds, that 'the Kuru race of ancient India, descended from the famous Kūrūh, the son of Samavarana, is too well known to require notice.'‡ And then this explanation is combined with the old view, by the argument, that although we have no right to suppose that Isaiah did or could blindly predict a mere unmeaning proper name of an individual two hundred years before his appearance, yet it is in accordance

* Hengstenberg's *Christology*, translated by Keith. I believe Hensler was the originator of this explanation.

† Hävernick, *Einleitung in d. A. T.* II. ii. 164. ff.

‡ *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, vol. xi. p. 112.

with the Christian idea of prophetic inspiration to believe that he could—miraculously indeed, but intelligibly to those who admit any miracles—utter such a prediction of a name thus significant of the nation and the office of him who was to bear it. This view has been worked out in an interesting manner by Hävernick; but it seems to me to be open to the main objections against that which we have already considered,—namely, that it offers us an hypothesis where we need a fact, historical or critical; that it starts from an unverified theory of prophecy, instead of ascertaining the nature of prophecy by a complete induction from facts; and that it forcibly, though ingeniously, adapts the facts to the theory. The difference between the two schools is here, as before, that the one is ready to sacrifice facts in order to get rid of figments, and the other to justify the figments for the sake of the facts, of which they are assumed, on both sides, to be an inseparable part. Yet here, as always,—we might be sure, though we could not see it,—earnestness and honesty are continually getting the better of passion and prejudice on both sides, and a middle path of truth is gradually clearing out.

Of this, I think, we find something in the explanation proposed by Möller, the Danish critic*,—that is, as to the word Coresh; for his Grotius-like supposition that these latter chapters were written by Isaiah during the captivity of Manasseh, and in historical reference to that event, seems less tenable. After urging the improbability that Isaiah should have exercised a power of prediction which Jesus Himself never showed, and that the name of a Persian king, though not that of the Saviour of the world, should have been thus predicted; and after showing the want of probability and coherence in the sense which it is now necessary to give to various passages in which Cyrus is supposed to be named or referred to; he concludes that the word is no proper name at all, and that it is as much by accident that Isaiah here uses a word consisting of the same letters with which the Jews afterwards wrote the name of Cyrus, as it is that he calls the mother of Immanuel עלמה 'Alma,' in chap. vii. 14., where no one finds a prediction of the 'alma mater' of the Church of Rome. He then proceeds to

* *De Authentiâ Oraculorum Esaiaë. Havniæ, 1825.*

inquire what is the meaning of the word, in the same way as scholars have to determine the meaning of so many other words, not only in Hebrew but in other languages, by reference to kindred roots, analogous forms, and by the sense of the context. This sense, he says, requires the word to indicate the people of Israel: and he explains it — בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל — to be, by metathesis for בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל, the participle Benoni of the root יָשַׁר, *to be right*, and so to mean, like the same participle of the cognate יָשָׁר, *upright* or *righteous*. He thus brings the word into connection with יִשְׁרָאֵל (Jeshurun, as the diminutive of endearment for Jashur, the Upright) in verse 2. of the same xlvth chapter in which we have Coresh; and with the same word יָשַׁר ('make straight,' or 'direct,' in our Version), in verses 2. and 13. of the next chapter, as well as in xl. 3, 4. The metathesis he justifies by the constant usage of the Hebrew, and suggests that it may have been here adopted in order to avoid the inconvenience of one word ending, and the next beginning, with ר.

I have hitherto met with none but the slightest and most contemptuous notice of this explanation of Möller's; but as far as it is possible to judge on a point which has not been argued out by scholars on both sides, I venture to think that it solves all the requirements of the case. If there be philological objections which I do not perceive, I should fall back on what the most cautious and positive critics admit to be an allowable mode of solving a difficulty, where all others are hopeless:—the change of the single word, as a simple corruption of the MSS., for some other which will properly supply its place. In any case I think the prophet is speaking of the 'Servant of the LORD,' and not of a Persian king. Let the reader try the effect of taking 'Coresh' in this sense, and I think he will find—not that nothing can be said against it, but—that it offers him the only really coherent text, and interpretation, that have been yet proposed; and that it presents nothing that we should have thought a difficulty, if we had not been so long accustomed to the rabbinical explanation.

'If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties,' says Bacon. And the one guide through these doubts

to certainties, is an honest, truthful temper: and this will be the easier to preserve, if we are on our guard against the ambition of acquiring complete knowledge while partial alone is possible for us. And I would remind the reader that in the case before us, it is better — will give more of the satisfaction which comes of real knowledge and nothing else — if he suspends his judgment till he can really see to the bottom of the difficulty with his own eyes, and does not attempt to persuade himself by partial statements and arguments, that he has found a complete solution, which his cooler judgment will disavow.

Yet the positive, matter-of-fact, method has served us hitherto: taking this book as we found it, and for what it professed to be, and the arrangement of its contents as an integral part of the text, no less needful to be studied than the grammar and logic of the sentences, yet fearlessly and honestly ascertaining at every step whether we were on firm ground, we have hitherto found the road plain enough: and while the critics do point out some apparent indications that our path now ends in what the haze of their speculations cannot make me call other than a sheer precipice, there is still a good hope that this seeming precipice is only the arrival of the road at the brow of a hill, from which, when we get to it, the view will be clearer and more extensive, and the forward road more plain than ever. Let us then return to the book as it is, and hear its own story, as far as we can make it out.

We have found, on examination, that there is no valid reason for doubting, that there is satisfactory reason for deciding, that all the prophecies hitherto under our consideration, are the genuine writings of Isaiah; and that each of them — that on Egypt among the rest — stands in its proper place: and from their contents we have gradually obtained a distinct acquaintance with the prophet's times, with his personal character, and with the nature and course of his political career. Uzziah's able administration, both foreign and domestic, with enough of military discipline, and actual warfare, to give manly energy to the people, yet with a still greater care for agriculture, trade, and commerce by land and sea, had raised Judah to a high point of material prosperity; and the impulse thus imparted to it, continued during the reign of his successor Jotham, whose nobles

and statesmen, like himself, not only inherited their fathers' political maxims and habits along with their wealth and honours, but had also been trained in their practical school. But their prosperity had long become merely material. For their morality was no more than an employment of the forms and the ministers of the law to effect iniquitous and criminal objects; and their religion a performance of the mosaic ritual, by men who did not conceal the sceptical opinions, or the superstitious idolatries, which had taken the place of a living faith in their minds, accordingly as these happened to be intellectual or formal. Consequently, when the third generation — that of Ahaz — succeeded, it was too completely enervated by luxury and vice to maintain the traditional policy even against such feeble enemies as Ephraim, Syria, or Philistia, and still less to make head against the truly formidable power which had begun again to threaten the world from Assyria. A crisis, or judgment day, had arrived, in which the general corruption and depravity must be punished, or else truth and righteousness would be permanently superseded by iniquity, and selfishness, and a mere kingdom of the devil. And the sentence then, as always, was executed through the providential coincidence of this attack from the scourge of God, with the moment when long-continued vice had produced that internal weakness and imbecility which are its proper fruits; according to the law which has united sin and its punishment in inevitable sequence, and provided that the loss of ordinary intelligence and ability to avoid the latter shall be one of the links of the chain. The accumulated wealth of the country was exhausted in buying, or rather trying to buy, the protection, or the forbearance, of the Assyrian hordes, who not only wasted the land year after year, when it was cultivated, but prevented its cultivation by carrying the inhabitants into slavery, and especially to Babylon, the people of which seem, according to Micah, Isaiah's cotemporary, as well as to himself, to have taken a chief part in the oppression of Israel. But reformation was the end, and punishment only the means, — the anger of a Father not only ready, but longing, to forgive his children, and to receive them again to his heart: and while the old vicious generation was thus gradually rooted out, a new one, of which Isaiah, Hezekiah, and Eliakim, were the leaders, grew up under the

salutary though trying discipline of national humiliation and suffering. And when this discipline had done all that it could do for that time; when God had by it taught his people all that they were capable of learning from it, without being wholly consumed in the process; and when He had at least secured a permanent result for the world, if not for a people too perverse to partake therein; He delivered Judah from its great oppressors, and restored it to peace and prosperity under its king.

Men are the agents, God Himself being present to direct them, in the accomplishment of the laws of His moral government of the world: and it was a main part of Isaiah's mission to 'make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and to shut their eyes, lest they should see and understand, and convert and be healed.' His deprecatory question 'LORD, how long,' is illustrated by his habitual practice of immediately following up his warnings and denunciations with consolatory promises: and if it ever seemed to him, as it seems to many of us now, that the melancholy task was imposed by an un pitying sternness, he would have learnt, and we may learn, that it was not so, when it was adequately explained by the events of after years. These showed that, whatever worth the national reformation under Hezekiah possessed, it did owe to the long continuance of the previous punishment; and that, even as it was, this had not been enough to make any permanent impression, but that in simple fact the people had been allowed to 'convert and be healed' too soon, and that the whole process had to be gone through again, with redoubled severity. And while the short narrative we have lately been considering in the thirty-ninth chapter, tells us how unflinchingly Isaiah threw down, with his own hands, the structure of national prospects which he had been building up during a ministry of near fifty years, the subsequent chapters, to the end of the book, show him deliberately raising it again, in a manner exactly consistent with his whole previous character and teaching. And consistent alike in its resemblances and its differences: for while the man and the prophet with whom we have become so familiar in the past prophecies, meets us throughout the new, in his old individual shape, we recognise and identify him, not more by his faith and hopes, his philosophy and imagination, and his whole method of

looking at men and things, and God's government of both, than by his wonted exercise of that prerogative of a man of genius, and a prophet of God, by which he adapts himself, and his teaching, to the new necessities which this new experience had revealed. And though I do not forget that there is no more perfect unity than that which results from the work of successive labourers actuated by the same idea, of which the Book of Psalms, the Bible itself, and, in another kind, the building of York cathedral, are instances; and though it would be possible to make out a very good case in favour of such being the unity of the book before us, if we only had a foundation of fact to begin with; still I appeal with confidence to the judgment of every thorough and matter-of-fact student of our text, whether there is not complete consistency and coherency in the mind and writings of the one man Isaiah; and whether the theory which divides him into an Isaiah and a 'Pseudo-Isaiah,' or 'Great Unnamed,' does not deprive the former, if not also the latter, half, of much more than half its meaning. To myself it often seems that, if these latter prophecies of Isaiah had been lost, some Cuvier or Owen of human science might be conceived restoring them in their actual shape, from the indications of their law and germ in his earlier writings. And, on the other hand, I am irresistibly reminded of the Jewish tradition, that Isaiah was sawn asunder by those who misunderstood, and denied, his real office and powers: — and think how that tradition has been, by a reversal of the ordinary process, provided with its philosophical idea, and transformed into a regular myth, after 2000 years of mere historical existence.

The 'years that bring the philosophic mind'* had come to Isaiah, with the last qualification needed to enable him to complete one of the few works which are 'not for an age, but for all

* I have already quoted this line from Wordsworth's ODE, in connection with this subject: but let me advise the reader to study the whole Ode, including the Title and the Motto, as a most instructive comment upon the whole spirit of prophecy, as exhibited by Isaiah; and especially as to the relation between these latter chapters and the earlier ones. Our seer, like the Hebrew one, teaches us how to connect 'the pansy at our feet' with 'truths that wake to perish never;' and to understand how 'our noisy years' may 'seem moments in the being of the eternal Silence.'

time.' He had, indeed, shown himself, by what he had done, well prepared for what yet remained. If he had reason, after delivering the LORD's last message to Hezekiah, to exclaim with the Psalmist, 'My spirit is overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate;' he knew how to add, 'I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Thy works; I muse on the work of Thy hands.'* And now that he had understood, and unequivocally declared in the LORD's name, and as His prophet, that his early warnings that the cities of Judah should be without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and that the LORD should remove men far away, and there should be a great forsaking in the land, had not been FULFILLED in the late years of calamity; that there was still to come a captivity, not of many inhabitants, but of the nation and its king; and a destruction, not of villages and towns, but of Jerusalem and the temple, when, in the words of his cotemporary, 'Zion should be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the mountain of the temple a forest, and the Daughter of Zion, the nation itself, should go forth out of the city, even to Babylon †;' he would be no less earnest to discover and to declare when, and how, were to be realised his own corresponding promises that 'Zion should be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness; that she should be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city; that in her should reign a king of the house of David, of the increase of whose government and peace there should be no end, and of which the blessings, spiritual no less than temporal, should not be limited to Israel, but extended to all nations, who should go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob to be taught of His ways, and to walk in His paths, and whom the LORD of hosts should bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria, the work of my hands, and Israel, mine inheritance.' And the latter half of the book tells us the result: — that the human and finite ideals of his youth, which he had expected to see realised in the fruits of his own ministry and Hezekiah's reign, had faded (as all such ideals do) like the the flower of the field, though not till they

* Psalm cxliii. 4, 5.

† The passage has been already quoted on the other side: the reader should consider its bearing both ways.

had served their purpose both for his countrymen and himself; but that to replace them there had been meanwhile maturing, and now was revealed to his purged and illumined eye, God's divine and infinite ideal of the destinies of Israel and mankind. His faith and hopes, and the whole tenour of his teaching, had from the first been based, not upon the merits of his nation, but upon God's original choice of them without any previous merit on their part, upon His good-will towards them, and upon His faithfulness in keeping the covenant He had made with them, however they might break it: and this purpose of goodness, of free grace, must remain still, and could as little be overcome by new sins as by the old ones. And yet what could kings and any prophets do more, nay, what could God Himself do, that He had not done, to effect it in the face of such inveterate resistance, and even incapacity? The answer, we may be sure, came to Isaiah through that diligent inquiry with which St. Peter, who entered so heartily into the spirit of the great and good of his own people, tells us it was the habit of the prophets to 'search what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*' He would ask himself what, more than he had hitherto supposed, was contained in those predictions which he had been moved to utter† when he and his disciples were, not only sharing the calamities which overwhelmed the nation at the beginning of the reign of Ahaz, but also bearing the contempt and persecutions of their unbelieving countrymen — to the effect that they were to look for relief and triumph, to the birth of a Child of the house of David, whose name should be called 'Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God:' and thus meditating upon these, and all the rest of his past prophecies, he would have been — we see that he actually was — at last prepared to receive, and to make known, a still more glorious revelation of God's counsels than had yet been made to him. This declared that the invisible LORD and Guide of the nation would come in His own person and effect that deliverance which His most pious representatives were unequal to accomplish, by bearing the sins of the nation as they could not be borne by any other king or prophet, however devoted to suffer, and to do all things for the nation's sake:

* 1 Peter, i. 10, 11.

† Chapters viii. ix.

and that out of this deliverance should spring, not a mere restoration and re-establishment of the kingdom of Israel under the Branch of the Stem of Jesse, but a universal kingdom, and one which in order to be universal would be spiritual, established in the hearts and lives of its subjects; and, therefore, no longer dependent on outward circumstances of national peace and prosperity for its development; but able, if need were, to found, and continually expand, itself, in spite, nay by help, of the absence of these things.

The idea of the whole Book of Isaiah is the same — God's government of Israel and mankind according to the laws which He has given for all their relations to Himself and to each other: but in the first part he is always seeking for, and setting forth, this idea in the events of his own times; and in the second half he contemplates the idea in itself, and only embodies it in such shadowy anticipations as to the outward form of the glorious but indefinite future, as his poetic imagination can project from the facts and probabilities of his own time; though into these shadowy forms he throws himself so completely, that it is often very hard for us not to think that they are the realities, and he — Isaiah — imaginary. This, I believe, is the real clue to that mixture of visionary indistinctness and historical literalness, which enables the advocates of the Pseudo-Isaian theory, and their opponents, each to make out so good a case: and, if so, what the reader wants is, not to decide between two rival sets of arguments, either of which may any day be replaced by another which the old victor cannot resist, but by frequent and prolonged meditation on the book itself, to acquire, if possible, the power of putting himself in the prophet's position, and looking at things as he looked at them. He must try and realise what Pope meant when, with a poet's feeling, he described Isaiah as 'the bard rapt into future times;' and what St. Peter, who gives us the true theological, as the other does the true human side, meant by saying, that 'it was revealed to the prophets, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now preached to us in the gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven?'"* This realisation is dif-

* 1 Peter, i. 12.

ficult, and can only be hoped for by help of that same guidance which led the Apostle thither, and which always supplies—even to the most prosaic — so much of the poetic faculty as the end demands. No mere logical or literary criticism will bring a man far on this road, still less do as a substitute for his actually taking the journey himself; but, perhaps, some of the obstacles at first setting off may be cleared away by such considerations as I have already suggested on the present, and previous occasions, and to which I now venture to make one or two additions.

The progress of the universe under God's plan has brought us to a very different position, and point of view, from that where the ancient world stood: we too have a future before us (and in these very days a wider and more glorious future is opening than mankind has yet seen), but much of their future has become our past; and we look back on great accomplished facts, and fixed starting points for our progress, which to them were still unrealised ideals,—buildings of which they were to announce the plans, but not themselves to lay the foundations, much less to begin our task, which is to raise the superstructure, now that their children and our fathers have done that intermediate work. This is more or less the case with all ancient history; but especially so with that of the Hebrews, which is a perpetual prophecy, and looking forward to what should come afterwards from all that the nation was doing then in a corner. It is easy enough to get rid of any amount, more or less according to individual taste, of the meaning either of particular parts, or of the whole tenour of Hebrew thought and feeling, laws and institutions; but such criticism is childish as well as dishonest. We do not want to get rid of, but to enter into, the meaning of the ancient oracles of 'the seed of the woman,' and 'the seed of Abraham;' and to read and think ourselves into the prophetic spirit of the books of Deuteronomy and Isaiah, and not to trifle with those modern falsifications of the text which so ingeniously prove the text to be itself the falsification. And as I have already noticed, the way in which Isaiah here projects himself into the future, is not to be set aside as fictitious, because it somewhat varies from that which he, and other prophets, adopt on other occasions. These critics select their facts by the test of a merely nineteenth-century,

European, notion of the human mind and its capacities, and that not derived from the best philosophy; and having thus excluded all such specimens of Hebrew prophecy as the 50th and 51st chapters of Jeremiah*, as well as the chapters of Isaiah now before us, and those earlier ones which have been pointed out as they occurred, they frame, by induction from the remaining materials, a theory by which to test the others. But while I agree that some previous examination and selection of facts is necessary on such occasions, I must repeat that this is no fair or scientific performance of the duty. The difficulty of the word Cyrus, and of the historical tone of parts of these chapters, is not cleared up, but only put in a new, if not aggravated shape, by the supposition of the late origin of the text: and though modern experience affords us no instance of such a projection not merely of the mind, but (so to speak) of the person, of a writer into the future, as is supposed in those chapters of Jeremiah, the others of Isaiah, and above all, these before us,—yet the analogous power which Shakspeare habitually exercises, of so identifying himself with an indefinite variety of times and persons, that no criticism has ever been able to distinguish him from them, is proof enough that there is nothing incredible, nothing non-human, in such a representation of the prophetic faculty, as they exhibit, if we accept them as genuine, with the single emendation, or explanation, given above. And therefore we have a right to take the one as well as the other set of facts — the one as well as the other phenomena of prophecy — as the basis of our induction: and if the old orthodox view is then shown to have been too limited, and to require modification as well as expansion, we may yet be sure, that in proportion as it is the more positive and matter-of-fact, so it is the truer and more scientific; and that we shall find that the new will harmonise with the old, in proportion as we enlarge — not our theories but — our basis of facts, and inductions from facts.

* Gesenius admits the genuineness of these; Ewald denies it, more consistently with their common theory.

NOTE to Page 317.

The question is not, as Strauss puts it, one of 'pre-suppositions,' but of facts. Strauss says, that his mind being free from all pre-suppositions except that of the amenability of all events to law, which is no pre-supposition, unless it can be denied, he has a right to regard the believing pre-suppositions of theologians as unscientific. (Engl. trans. i. x. 73, 74.) But the theologian will be unsound, as well as weak, who replies, as Strauss expects, that 'this absence of pre-supposition is unchristian:' the one question between him and Strauss is, whether the latter reasoner's mode of applying that general law, of the amenability of all events to law, does explain *all* the *facts* it meets with. If it does not; if it is obliged to ignore many facts, and leave others without real explanation, in order to preserve an apparent truth and coherence for itself; then we have a right to say that, while quite ready to grant the universality of the law, we demur to this mode of applying it, because it is unscientific. For pre-suppositions, instead of being nothing, are every thing, in this New Theology. Thus, when Strauss (p. 71.) admits that the old sceptical way of putting the law of the invariable succession of finite causes and effects, 'although it does not exactly deny the existence of a God, yet puts aside the idea of him' . . . so that he is 'no longer a God and Creator, but a mere finite Artist, who acts immediately upon his work only during its first production, and then leaves it to itself;' and when he proposes to supersede both this, and the ancient and modern 'views of supernaturalism,' by enouncing the hypothesis that 'God acts upon the world as a Whole immediately, but on each part only by means of his action on every other part, that is to say, by the laws of nature;' we are struck with a kind of imposing grandeur, which promises to fill and satisfy the mind. But bring the words to the test, by asking them what they mean, and you soon find that 'though' (in Bacon's words) 'they have a show of strength, in that each part seemeth to support and sustain the others, yet this is more satisfactory than substantial.' Who can discover any fact of which the phrase, 'God acts upon the world as a Whole, immediately,' is the expression; who can deny that the rest of the sentence ignores — 'pre-supposes' the non-existence of — those facts of consciousness, the sense of sin, the sense of pardon, the gift of God's Spirit, His answers to prayer, His creation and building up of a new life in the soul? While the supporters of the applicability of positive investigation to moral and intellectual, as well as physical, subjects, agree with Strauss that all theological or theoretical dogmas must be eliminated from the province of true philosophy, they add, that all metaphysical theories must follow; and that a science of facts, and laws discoverable in facts, must and will supersede both. And the Christian, who holds the faith of Paul and Luther, says the same; and stands only on facts, — facts of history and facts of consciousness. It is not denied (by the highest English authorities) that the latter, the facts of consciousness, are no less real and cognisable than those

of sense ; provided only that they are facts : and the Christian can appeal to such a series of experiments, in his own heart, and in the Church for two, nay four, thousand years,—to such examinations into the reality of these facts,—as nothing else has ever been subjected to, in any department of that nature which Bacon has taught us must be ‘ bound, and tortured, pressed, formed, and turned out of her course by art and industry,’ if we will thoroughly sift facts from notions. If the doctrine of the amenability of all facts to law, will not take in these facts, the fault must be in it, not in the facts : but the remedy is, not to get rid of the doctrine altogether, but to re-state it in a less narrow and one-sided manner, so that it may comprehend the one as well as the other — the spiritual as well as the natural — set of facts. And this the Bible, and only the Bible, teaches us the way of doing effectually, by its distinctions between man and the world, and between the laws of nature and the laws of spirit.

Again : Strauss (after assuming, as undeniable, Hume’s doctrine of the absolute incompatibility of a single miracle with a scientific theory of the world, which English thinkers consider quite superseded by Mr. J. S. Mill’s argument on the subject) states — with certain, no doubt unintentional, mistakes — the view of those who maintain the old Christian faith in the language of modern philosophy ; and replies to their assertion that the object of that faith is at once the historical Jesus, and Christ dwelling in the heart, that on the one hand ‘ it cannot be proved that that inward experience is not to be explained without the actual existence of such a Christ,’ and that on the other an historical individual cannot present the perfect and archetypal ideal : and he offers us, instead of what he thus takes away, his grand theory of the ‘ idea of humanity,’ which is ‘ alone the absolute sense of Christology.’ But we are no more concerned to answer him, than we should be to prove the reality of the sun to some one who offered to explain the phenomena of our experience by an ‘ idea ’ of warmth or light : we have only to state the fact, and say with St. John, We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true ; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ.

I am unacquainted with M. Comte’s work on the application of ‘ Positivisme ’ to Christianity : but no thoughtful Christian can read Mr. Grote’s chapters on the religious faith of the ancient Greeks, as seen in the light of positive science, without hearing the ‘ *mutato nomine de te fabula narratur* ’ ring in his ears at every step, and recognising an attack upon his Christian faith, by the side of which those of Strauss and his speculative school shrink into insignificance. But positive science is not the less the Christian’s one trustworthy weapon of controversy, for all that. He must meet Mr. Grote’s ‘ pre-supposition ’ that the Lord of Abraham, and of us men, women, and children throughout Christendom, is a creation of man’s imagination, like Jupiter or Apollo, — by the fact that He is the Living God.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE VISION OF THE CAPTIVITY AND DELIVERANCE.—THE TRANSITORY AND THE PERMANENT.—GOD IN NATURE, AND IN HUMAN SOCIETY.—THE POWERLESS GODS OF THE NATIONS.—THE JEWISH INSTITUTION OF THE REDEEMER.—ITS EFFECT ON THE MORE ENLIGHTENED JEWS. — THE DELIVERER, KING, AND TEACHER. — THE WORK OF ISAIAH AND HEZEKIAH. — ITS SUCCESS AND ITS FAILURE.—JEWISH IDEA OF THE MESSIAH.—ITS RELATION TO THEIR POLITICAL LIFE.—ATONEMENT A HUMAN FACT.—A RATIONAL IDEA.—UNION OF HALF-TRUTHS.— THE MESSIAH OF THE GOSPEL. — THE PROPHETS AND THE APOSTLES. — ISAIAH'S SCIENCE OF POLITICS — HIS DEATH — HIS TRIUMPH.

OF the manifest continuity of these twenty-six chapters, it has been well said that 'the whole flows on like a river, poured forth at one time from a breast entirely possessed and filled by the Holy Spirit:' and we might add, that the frequent repetition of the same thoughts, resembling the rise and fall of the waves, while the stream holds its steady, onward, course, is among the indications that the inspired seer speaks as the vision rises before his illumined eye, and as the Word of the LORD impels him to describe it; and that he did not sit down to write with any systematic and deliberate arrangement of all that he had to say. If this repetition seems excessive on one point—the absurdity of idolatry—we may remember that reason and history unite to teach us the great practical importance of the eradication of this vice from the heart of the Jewish people. If to effect this was, as is probable, the main object of the Babylonish captivity, and an object worth attaining even by such severity, it was worth also the prophet's pertinacity, at the cost of a little literary elegance.

The first two verses of chapter xl. form an introduction, in which the prophet throws himself into the future, beyond the end of the great national judgment foretold in the last chapter: and whether our idiom will or will not bear the literal translation of the future form of the original, which is not 'saith your

God,' but 'your God shall say,' Calvin must be right in noticing that it has an appropriate emphasis.

The great desert between Babylon and Judea suggests the like imagery with that which Isaiah had already employed to express the like idea in chapter xxxv. : and probably both here, and there, may be traced an under-thought of the passage of Israel through the wilderness when he came out of Egypt. But the prophet's language now is more ideal than before ; and we shall exclude a main part, if not the whole, of his meaning, if we introduce arbitrary limitations to define what he leaves indefinite, and pronounce, more positively than his own words do, that he supposes himself in Babylon, or Jerusalem, or the Desert ; or that he does, or does not, represent the LORD as bringing back the captive nation from the former city. The period is no doubt that of the Captivity, and not of the reign of Hezekiah ; but the words and images of the prophet show that his eye glances from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven, with little restraint of time and place : with the ubiquity of genius and of inspiration, he sees the appointed term of Israel's hard warfare arrived ; he hears the herald of their approaching LORD ; he calls on Jerusalem and Zion, themselves free and rejoicing in a moment, to spread the good tidings among the other cities of Judah, and to declare that this LORD is their own King, and their God. What enemies He has been triumphing over, what deliverance He has been effecting, whether He comes alone to a people already waiting to receive Him, or is bringing them with Him, redeemed or recovered from captivity, the vision defines not : but it sees that the triumph will be complete, and the glory manifest ; that the LORD God will do the whole work that has to be done ; and earn the effectual deliverance of His people ; and that, with a love no less tender than His power is strong,

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd :
 He shall gather the lambs with His arm,
 And carry them in His bosom ;
 And shall gently lead the nursing ewes.

The prophet sees into the dark night of the future only by momentary flashes of light ; but his vision is still farther inter-

rupted by the doubt expressed in verses 6 and 7., where he seems to ask, How can these promises of God be more effectual now than before, when, after they had been made in a manner apparently so ample, we saw them all nullified by that act of Hezekiah? And the other voice within him, — ‘voices of two different natures,’ — replies, that it is true that man is at best so weak and sinful, that if God leaves him for a moment, to try him, and to know all that is in his heart, he falls away as certainly as the grass withers when the wind of heaven blows on it: but what then? ‘The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the Word of our God shall stand for ever:’ that Word which in nature has been so efficacious, that every created thing still keeps the whole law and course which was imposed on it when, in the first day of its creation, God SAID, Let it be so, can and will be no less informative and quickening in the spirit of man. Isaiah looks on the whole Jewish polity, which had in his days attained to the highest development of which it was capable; he sees and feels that not in this is there any continuance, anything which can be really trusted in for strength, and righteousness, and eternal life; and thus he is able to hear and understand the voice which declares that those things may and will fade like grass, yet that men may rise out of this transitory state, by laying hold on the permanence of God. And what the prophet thus implies, the apostle, in the fulness of time, could actually assert, when he quotes these words, and explains, that while man’s corruptible nature is like the fading grass, the gospel preaches to us that we may be born again to a new and incorruptible life, by the Word of God; and that thus being made partakers of the divine nature, we may each personally escape the corruption which is in the world, and purify our souls in obeying the truth through the spirit; and at the same time become members of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.*

Cicero could ask, ‘When we look at the heavens, first in all

* 1 Peter, i. 22. to ii. 10.; 2 Peter, i. 4. All the epistles indeed, from first to last, are nothing but expositions of the practical substitution, wrought by Christ, of the power of an endless life for the law of a carnal commandment.

their unclouded beauty, and then with such rapid changes passing over their face; when we consider the alternations of day and night, and the succession of the four several seasons; when we behold the sun which regulates all these, and the moon and stars all keeping their courses with unfailing constancy; can we doubt that some present and efficient Ruler is over them?''* And Seneca says, 'They all continue, not because they are eternal, but because the watchfulness of their Governor protects them: imperishable things need no guardian; but these are preserved by their Maker, who, by his power, controls their natural tendency to decay.'† And Hume, though his philosophy was perhaps less profound than that of either Roman, could raise his hands to the starry sky, and show that he too had a human heart, by exclaiming to Fergusson, 'O Adam, how can a man look at that, and not believe in a God!' But Isaiah, while he here handles this argument with an eloquence sublimer and more earnest than any of theirs, does not stop in this 'Court of the Gentiles,' but makes that assertion of the reality and power of the Creator which is their end, a step to his higher conclusion, that He is also the God of the spirits of men; and that the wisdom and power which He exhibits in nature are but the symbols that 'He fainteth not, neither is weary,—there is no searching of His understanding,' in a region in which natural order and life are of no avail. It may seem at first as though this were to prove a higher by a lower attribute of God: but the works of creation have this special effect, that they bear witness that God is in Himself, and not merely in relation with us; and then through this revelation, of an Absolute Being, in creation, we are the easier led on to apprehend the higher truth and fact of an Absolute God of our spirits, in whom we are to trust, even though this or that accustomed relation between Him and us seems to have failed. The pious Israelite, the Nation, the Church, must not suppose that, because their way is hid from themselves, and nothing appears but the oppression of utter desolation of spirit and circumstances, therefore God does not see the way, and is not actually working it out, and preparing to do His people right and justice, by

* *Tusc. Quæst.* i.† *Epist.* lviii.

methods not the less wise because they are for the time inscrutable. Let man wait for God : —

They that wait on the LORD shall renew their strength ;
They shall raise the wing, like eagles ;
They shall run, and not be weary ;
They shall walk, and not faint.

In reply to Israel's complaint (xl. 27.) that his cause against the heathen oppressors is neglected or dismissed by the Great Judge, God now (chap. xli. 1.) summons the nations to His court of justice ; and as Israel had just been assured that, if they would wait upon the LORD, they would renew their strength, and discern His wisdom, an interval is granted to the heathens and their gods, in which they too may renew their strength, and have time to produce evidence of the powers of design and action possessed by their gods, and in virtue of which they claim the right to keep Israel in subjection. The solemn pause thus allowed — ‘ Keep silence . . . : then let them speak ’ — is filled (how bitter the irony !) by the nations employing their carpenters and goldsmiths to make a particularly good and strong set gods, because there is a general alarm that the emergency is great. For it is already seen that the judgment goes against them by default : that these gods can show no plans, can do nothing good or bad ; and that they, and their worshippers, have neither right nor power to break up the designs of Almighty Wisdom. They have been trying to do this, by those oppressions of Israel which were only permitted for a time, because they fell into and formed a part of God's own plan. But Israel had from the first an appointed and chief place in that plan : He who is at once King of Israel and God of all the earth, has been maintaining His chosen people in their place, generation after generation, when He made Abraham His friend, and gave the blessing to his seed, and when He made the rock yield springs of water under the rod of Moses : and now, though they are reduced to extremity of weakness and dismay, the Holy One of Israel bids them fear not, for He has taken upon Himself to be their Redeemer.

In order to understand and realise the meaning and force of

this word—Redeemer—throughout Isaiah's prophecies, as indeed wherever it occurs in the Hebrew books, we must consider what the institution and office of the 'Goel' or Redeemer, in the Hebrew commonwealth, actually was. It was a properly patriarchal office: yet, with a provision for the progressive as well as the conservative element, such as is not usually found in patriarchal institutions, it was an office which devolved rather on the elder brother than on the father; on the near and powerful kinsman of the rising generation, rather than on the head of the family. It was his duty, when any branch of the family fell into decay, to ransom both the patrimonial land and the enslaved owner; to avenge their blood when shed in feud; and to marry the childless widow, and so keep alive in Israel the name and line of her first husband. The Book of Ruth supplies living lineaments to the legal enactments of Moses*: and when we once accustom ourselves to the Jewish point of view, and see the actual institution, and its workings, as they saw it, we shall perceive that these must have given the characteristics of a 'Goel,' or Redeemer, to many a national hero, — to a Moses, a Joshua, or a Samson, as well as to a Joseph whom 'God sent before' his father's house, 'to preserve them a posterity in the earth, and to save them with a great deliverance.' Thus there grew up a distinct and well understood faith, in the minds of the more experienced and enlightened Jews, of an invisible Redeemer, of whom these were but the earthly and partial representatives. This faith we recognise in Jacob, when he invoked for Joseph's sons the guardianship of the 'God who had fed him all his life long, and the Angel which had redeemed him from all evil†; ' by Job, when he met the worst evils of the present time with the assertion, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth‡; ' and by Isaiah, throughout the prophecies before us. Vitranga, after quoting these words of Jacob, and of Job, adds, 'That under the Old Economy that Angel—the assertor and avenger—did not discharge the whole office to which He was

* Leviticus, xxv. 24. ff.; Numbers, xxxv. 19. ff. The word translated 'Avenger' in the latter passage is the same (Goel) as 'Redeemer' in the former.

† Genesis, xlviii. 16.

‡ Job, xix. 25.

destined: yet in every liberation of the people of God, and every vindication of their rights which He did effect, the Church might discern, as in a type, the preludings* of that office of Redeemer, which, by the will of the Father, He was to fulfil in the last times.'

A Redeemer, or Deliverer, is appointed (chapter xlii.) to carry out the judgment pronounced upon the islands and nations just called to trial. And this judgment is farther explained to be, on the one hand, a moral conversion of the Gentiles by means capable of addressing their mind and spirit; and on the other, a triumph over all irreclaimable rebels, by the LORD going forth as a man of war, and Himself making waste the mountains and hills, and giving occasion to the righteous, not only of Israel but also of the Gentiles, to give glory to Him, and to rejoice in the accomplishment of the great design of the universe which He alone, and none of the graven images, had framed from the beginning. But in the previous chapter (xli. 2.) there is another description of the same, or another, deliverer, variously interpreted to refer to Cyrus, to Abraham and his posterity, to Christ, or to the Gospel under the name of 'righteousness:' and—with reservation of the final decision as to 'Coresh'—I am unable to exclude any of these meanings, here and in the like passages, or to explain their concurrence or interchange, except by recognising the whole as a vision or discourse in which the speaker has taken up an ideal position far removed from his actual one, and allows his imagination to carry him where it will, uncurbed by logical forms. It is generally true, that the more we can bring together the partial and divergent lights of the commentators of different periods and modes of thinking, and the more careful we are that it is on the simple text itself, and not on their statement of it, that we concentrate their rays, the more likely are we to get at least a glimpse of its real, adequate, meaning. And no where is this more the case than in these descriptions of the 'servant of God,' which fill so large a part of the rest of the book. The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, has from the beginning

* *Preludebat huic officio.* So an English divine speaks of "the preludings of the incarnation."

planned, and brought into operation, a moral, political, spiritual constitution and order, as well as a physical world; and He has chosen one nation for the first and normal embodiment and illustration of the design, and to be the main instrument for carrying it out in all other nations, and for uniting them in an universal brotherhood: and now that this nation has itself sunk under the evils out of which it was to lead the others, the original plan provides an adequate Redeemer and Guide for it and them. That the work extends over ages of time, employs races as well as individuals, and is in the main spiritual, and the work of God himself, is plainly declared by the prophet. If we choose to think that at one or two points of his vision he sees that one external portion of the work is to be effected by a Persian conqueror (though the other way of explaining the word gives the more coherent sense), yet in many more places he plainly looks either for a direct interposition of divine power, as in the overthrow of Sennacherib; or else for the appearance of a hero like David, who will lead his people to fight their own battle. And side by side with this idea of the Redeemer, appear, throughout the book, those of the King, and the Prophet or Teacher: while each of these finds its counterpart in the answering images of Israel and the Church. The nation is redeemed from Babylon, and from Edom, which is the symbol of Babylon, as Babylon is of all godless tyranny: it is established in a prosperity never known by Hezekiah or Solomon; it is secured in possession of these blessings by a covenant that they shall have a more spiritual guidance than heretofore*: and all this is but the inmost circle of the ever-widening, universal, Church, which is indeed for the most part depicted as a political and social subordination of the Gentiles to Israel, but in more than one place as a real illumination and spiritual organisation of the Gentiles themselves, by the LORD of Israel, who employs His chosen people as instruments for that, the original end for which they were chosen. Thus, in chapter xlii. 6., ‘I, the LORD will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;’ and again, in chapter xlix. 6.,

* Chapter lix. 21.

And He said,
 It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant
 To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
 And to restore the preserved of Israel :
 I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles,
 That thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth : —

And, in chapter li., verses-4, 5, 6., the correspondence of which with the opening verses of chapter ii., is so marked,

Hearken unto me, my people,
 And give ear unto me, O my nation :
 For a law shall proceed from me,
 And I will establish my judgment for a light of the peoples.
 My righteousness is near, my salvation is gone forth,
 And mine arms shall judge the peoples :
 The isles shall wait upon me ; and on mine arm shall they trust.
 Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
 And look upon the earth beneath :
 For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke,
 And the earth shall wax old like a garment,
 And they that dwell therein shall die in like manner :
 But my salvation shall be for ever,
 And my righteousness shall not be abolished.

If the reader will forgive some unavoidable repetition, he may perhaps find our subject still clearer, if we follow into farther detail that method — which, though as old as St. Peter, is as new as the most modern critical science,—of considering the prophet's meaning in the light in which he must have himself contemplated it, and also in that in which it presents itself to us who live after the coming of Christ. Isaiah, meditating upon the experience of his past life, would find that the various qualifications of an adequate Redeemer, King, and Teacher, unfolded themselves before him, at the same time with his vision of the depressed and destitute state of Israel and the world, and of the divine and universal polity which was to be brought out of these. He had been called to the office of prophet, in the days of Uzziah, by the LORD, who had elected him to be His servant, and upheld him in his duty by continually ' putting

His spirit upon him.’* He was endowed with ‘the tongue of the learned’ in no ordinary measure, and might have ‘made his voice to be heard in the streets,’ while a sympathising audience approved his haughtiest eloquence, if he had only used it to enforce the maxims of worldly wisdom; but he had not turned back from the harder task, of preaching and teaching in all humility and patience the unpalatable doctrine of a holy, God-trusting life. He had taken care, neither to ‘break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax,’ when his ministry produced some weak result; nor to suffer his own spirit to be broken and quenched, when all result seemed wanting, and when he had to submit to be ‘despised by man and abhorred by the nation †,’ or even (like so many prophets before and after him ‡, and as was most probably his lot in the reign of Ahaz) to ‘give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.’ § And like other ‘preachers of righteousness in the great congregation ||,’ he had protested continually against that abuse of the Levitical sacrifices which turned them into an *opus operatum* ¶; and like them, he had learnt that the meaning of these sacrifices must be realised by a man sacrificing himself, ‘pouring out his soul,’** and that not for himself only, but for his brethren also. And Hezekiah—the king co-operating with the prophet in the work of national reformation—had, by a like life of toil and self-sacrifice, contended with the same, or corresponding, obstacles in his efforts to ‘bring forth justice in, and by, the force of truth,’ and to ‘establish it in the land,’ and ‘extend it to the nations’ around. And lastly, the ‘Angel of the LORD’ had destroyed the power of Sennacherib, and compelled him to let his captives return to their own land, there to enjoy peace and prosperity under their own king and laws, and to worship their own God in Zion. These ‘former things had come to pass,’ and Isaiah could distinguish the design and the hand of God in them,

* Chapter xlii. 1. ff.

† Chap. xlix. 7.

‡ Matthew, xxiii. 29—39.; Hebrews, xi. 35—38.; and the whole Jewish history to which these passages refer.

§ Chap. i. 4, 5, 6.

|| Psalm xl. 6—10. See the whole passage.

¶ Chap. i. 11., xliii. 23. 24.

** Chapter liii. 12.

no less than in His creating the heavens, spreading out the earth, and giving breath to the people upon it: but he had also seen that the deliverance, and restoration, and reformation, effected by these means were only temporary and external; and thus he would be led by the Holy Spirit to perceive that a mightier Prophet than himself, a greater King than Hezekiah, a more effectual Redeemer than that Angel, was needed, and might be looked for; and so the idea would dawn upon his inward eye, of the coming of ONE who could adequately fill all these offices, and really accomplish a work to which no mere man, or angel, was competent, however divinely directed and upheld. For observe—since in this we have the clue to the transition from the expectation of a human, to that of a Divine, Redeemer—that the work of Isaiah and Hezekiah, which had so failed of any but an external and temporary result, had not been itself external and temporary, but spiritual, and wrought by spiritual men, who made ‘righteousness the girdle of their loins, and faithfulness the girdle of their reins;’ and who had sacrificed themselves, and not bulls and goats, for their nation, and yet with no more efficacy than if it had been only the latter. Nothing better in *degree*, could supply the want: what man could do had been done, and it was now proved that something different in *kind* was required, something which could raise humanity above itself,

‘And give to every power a double power,
Above their functions and their offices.’

And just in proportion as Isaiah, and those who heard his words, could enter into the meaning of this coming of the Messiah, the God-man, could they realise that they had, after all, a firm ground of faith and hope to stand on. The idea of the Messiah is the keystone of the arch of prophecy, and makes a living temple of Jewish history: he who had it, found it again possible to see a divine life and meaning in the office and acts of each particular king and prophet; in the nation; and in each of its constituted and corporate orders; even while it could no longer be questioned that they were all in themselves but transitory symbols. And thus, for us too, in like manner—if this prophecy of the ‘Servant of the Lord,’ which is the central subject of these last

twenty-six chapters of Isaiah, be clearly understood to speak properly, and directly, of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of David, it throws a clear light upon all the other interpretations which have been offered as substitutes for this. The 'Servant of the LORD' has been explained to be Cyrus, Isaiah himself, Hezekiah, Josiah, Jeremiah, or some unknown prophet: the House of David, the Maccabees, the Jewish Nobles in the times of the Exile: the Priesthood, the Order of Prophets, the Jewish Nation, and the spiritual Israel, or Church in the nation: and it is very interesting and instructive to see how much reason may be adduced in favour of each of these interpretations, and yet how each is unable to hold its place, for more than a moment; because each, though a shadow, is only a shadow, and a finite, as well as transient, image of the infinite and substantive Original. Let the words of the prophet be applied, in as far as they are applicable, to each of these, and to all other, 'preludings' of the incarnation: it will not be the less true, it will be even the more manifest, that only in the coming of our LORD Jesus Christ were they FULFILLED.

It is not denied by their authors or advocates, that some of the interpretations of the 53rd chapter, above enumerated, are intended to supersede the belief that Jesus is the Christ, or that there is either Christ, or Prophecy, in the Christian sense; and they say that they thus offer us a rational explanation, instead of an unintelligible dogma of theology. But we must not mistake them, because they mistake us. They do recognise a valuable half-truth, which theologians have too much overlooked; and the neglect of which has made the Christian idea of the Atonement seem too much like an arbitrary dogma, when it might have been shown as well as felt (for the latter it always has been) to be the fullest and most luminous manifestation of an universal law, and one with which, in its lower operations, we are all more or less acquainted. The passage I have already referred to in the 40th Psalm, is enough for mere logical proof that the idea of self-sacrifice for others, as the highest and most effective duty, was intelligible to the more enlightened at least of the ancient Hebrews; but if any one has any difficulty in realising how Isaiah could, nay must, have given the words of this 53rd chapter, a sound, coherent sense, derived from his

own experience and observation, I would pray him to look into *his* own experience and observation in the matter. The soft answer which restores good humour in a casual conversation; the forbearance with which the statesman meets the ignorances and prejudices, the censures and the slanders, of those to whom he only sues for leave to do them good; the work of the minister of the Gospel, of which St. Paul, among other hardly less strong expressions, asserts that 'he fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ;'^{*} are but instances of an universal law of man's constitution, discoverable in all human relationships, and which enacts that men can, and do, endure the evil doings of their brethren, in such sort that, through that endurance on the part of the innocent, the guilty are freed from the power — from both the guilt and the punishment — of their ill deeds. And if these instances seem insignificant or foreign, there is one which, in some form or other, must have come home to the heart of every one not deficient in the commonest observation and sympathies. There is hardly any one but has known some household in which, year after year, selfishness and worldliness, and want of family affection, have been apparent enough; and yet, instead of the moral break-up which might have been expected, and the final moral ruin of the various members, the original bond of union has held together: there has plainly been some counteracting, redeeming, power at work; and at last it has turned out that, not only has the course of that household not been downward to ruin, but has taken a new and upward direction, when some outward event, a death, or a marriage, brought to a crisis the elements of a change long maturing in secret. This, I say, is the commonest of all stories; and when we look again to see what is that redeeming power, ever at work for those who know and care nothing about it, we always find that there is some member of that family — oftenest the wife or mother — who is silently bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, for them, but for her or himself expecting little or nothing in this world, but the rest of the grave. Such a one is really bearing the sins of that household, and thus saving them from the guilt as well as punishment of sin: it is no dogma, no forensic phrase transferred by way of

^{*} Colossians, i. 24.

illustration from the practice of the law courts ; but a fact, a vital formation, actually taking place, here, under our very eyes. He who has seen and understood this fact, in any one of its common, daily, shapes, needs no commentary on such words as —

His visage was so marred more than any man,
And his form more than the sons of men : —
He hath no form, nor comeliness ; and when we shall see him,
There is no beauty that we should desire him.
He is despised and rejected of men,
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief :
And we hid as it were our faces from him ;
He was despised, and we esteemed him not.
Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ;
Yet did we esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities :
The chastisement of our peace was upon him ;
And with his stripes we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray ;
We have turned every one to his own way ;
And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.
He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
Yet he opened not his mouth :
As a lamb is brought to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before her shearers is dumb,
So he opened not his mouth.
He was taken from prison and from judgment :
And who among his generation will consider,
That he was cut off, out of the land of the living,
For the transgression of my people,—stricken for them.
And he made his grave with the wicked,
And with the rich in his death ;
Though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.
Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him ; He hath put him to grief :
When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,
He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,
And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied :
By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many ;

And their iniquities shall he bear.
Therefore will I divide him a portion with the many,
And he shall divide the spoil with the strong ;
Because he hath poured out his soul unto death,
And was numbered with the transgressors ;
And he bare the sin of many,
And for the transgressors will make intercession.

We may notice the expression 'It pleased the LORD' to bruise him, which, according to the usual Hebrew spirit, and way of looking at things, is equivalent to our saying that it is an ultimate fact, the original seat of a law. And without pretending to any metaphysical depth or accuracy, I may help to make my meaning intelligible, by saying, that this law is, that one human will can unite itself with another, and raise up the latter out of a state of sin and misery, not otherwise to be escaped from, if it (the former) consents and submits to be accounted a partaker in the guilt, and therefore, to be actually made a sharer in the misery of that other. But it is a part of the same law,—every instance that can be produced will show it—that no man can thus bear the sins of another, unless he be himself blameless in the matter then in hand. In the minor and more outward relationships and duties of life, this qualification of blamelessness is to be found of the kind required ; for there are virtuous as well as vicious men in the world : but when we go a little deeper, we discover a difficulty which threatens to invalidate all our philosophy, if we attempt to reduce it to practice. Every man, the most virtuous, the meekest, holiest, most loving, no less than the most selfish and vicious, is at bottom a sinner ; has that inherent defect and corruption in him which we call original sin ; and is thereby disqualified from this which — as we have said — is the only way in which man can be saved out of the guilt and misery in which he has involved every relationship of his life. Whatever we may have seen the minister of religion, the patriot, the wife, or the mother, doing, and doing with success, we have in the back ground the certainty that their good works must be out-flanked at last, because the evil which they are saving others from is still there, in themselves : the end may be put off, but must come at last, which the prophet expresses, when he says,

‘I looked, and there was none to help.’ And thus we arrive once more, as Isaiah arrived before us, at the necessity for the coming of One who, because He is God as well as man, is free from this defect; and, therefore, can bear the sins of the whole world, and of each man in it, without failing in the last resort. And thus, and then, each Christian minister, each Christian ruler, each Christian member of a family, will and does receive power to do that in his lower sphere, which has first been done for him in the higher. And thus man, made in the image of God the Creator, is renewed in the image of God the Saviour; and can reflect that image among his brethren, having the mind of Christ, and being a fellow-worker with Him.*

Thus we do justice to the half-truth, the finite, human, element, in the Jewish and rationalist interpretations, and at the same time bring the Christian interpretation, with its whole truth, human and divine in one, into fuller light than if we overlooked or denied the former. And this is not less the case as to the explanation that the ‘Servant of the LORD’ means the Jewish Nation. What was true of the King of the nation, its real Head and Representative, must be true of the nation itself, in as far as it acknowledged Him, walked in His light, was clothed with His righteousness, and actuated by His Spirit. The history of the foundation of the Church by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, all Jews, and the fact that the Bible is wholly a Jewish book, show how truly and how peculiarly the law came forth from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem, to all nations; while the same thing was partially and symbolically effected in the preceding ages of the people. And then, when they ‘would not have this man to rule over them,’ it became inevitable that they should bear their own sins, which they refused to let Him bear for them; and it may, therefore, well be possible to trace a close resemblance between this prophetic description of the sufferings of the Messiah, with those which the pride and rebellion of the nation have brought upon themselves. And it is interesting, and illustrative, that the Jews not only excluded the Messiah from their interpretation, as far at least as

the 53rd chapter is concerned, in order to hold their ground better against their Christian opponents who urged on them that it was fulfilled in the sufferings of Jesus the Son of Mary ; but that the periods of history in which the persecutions of the Jews have been most cruel, are (it is said) those in which their writers are found to dwell most earnestly, and with a view to the practical instruction of the people themselves, upon this interpretation. They felt how terribly real its application to themselves was.

The manner in which the New Testament writers assume this prophecy to refer to Jesus Christ *, seems to indicate that, as the Holy Spirit led them into all truth, and opened their eyes to understand the meaning of Moses and the Prophets, — the records of God's counsels and works — they perceived, on the one hand, what the character of the Messiah must be in order to His filling the proper place in those counsels, and, on the other, how this very character was actually exhibited, in all its parts, in the life and conversation of their Master. And thus the two, the idea and the answering fact, united so simply and naturally in their minds, that there seemed no occasion to assert — it was enough to notice — the reality of the union.

There is, in our day, a growing disinclination to attend to those minute correspondences between these words of Isaiah, and the details of our LORD's death and burial, which were once thought (by Paley for instance) so important a part of the evidences of Christianity. It would be easy to suggest grounds for thinking that our philosophy may be as one-sided as that of our fathers in this respect. The course of the universe, the working out by God of His original design, has its harmonies, and its relations of the parts to each other and to the whole ; and the time is coming — I might say, come — when each of these partial relations must be seen in its harmony with the whole, or remain uninformative, nay, unintelligible, to us. But, meanwhile, we are neither to fancy the higher relations where we cannot, nor deny the lower to exist because we do not, see them. One advantageous effect of this diminished interest in

* Matthew, viii. 17. ; John, xi. 51. ; Acts, viii. 32. ; 1 Peter, ii. 23, 24, 25.

the literal fulfilment of prophecy, we may notice, in the increased importance which it has allowed prophecy itself — as distinguished from that literal fulfilment — to take. We can answer better than our fathers could, the question, what Prophecy was given for : whether it had not some place of its own, some specific purpose ? For if God's purpose in giving it to us had been to supply a ground for such arguments as Paley builds upon it, it would surely have been much more explicit and literal : and again, if the spiritual and practical light to be gained from it were exactly the same as that which the New Testament expositions throw on the death of Christ,— and this would be so, if the one, like the other, is a statement and exposition of facts — then one or the other part of the Bible becomes superfluous. But when we see that Prophecy is the setting forth of God's Design, as a Design, we can recognise the method of the Bible, and find that each part of the revelation has its proper meaning, and power of throwing light on the rest. And this 53rd chapter of Isaiah, in particular, exhibits the IDEA of the Atonement, as an Idea. The FACTS are recorded in the Gospels and Acts. The Epistles declare and expound the union of the facts with the idea. And, if we will fully understand them in this union, we must also understand, and, therefore, study them, separately; for which this provision has been made by God.

Induction of the law, from the events of his own time : deduction therefrom of a future realisation of that law in universal society : — such are Isaiah's contributions to the science of politics ; while to those who have come after him belongs the verification required to complete the circle. And in following Isaiah in this his method, and then doing our own part, we find, along with a science of politics, a canon of positive criticism, which enables us to investigate the question of the genuineness of the book, without excluding historical evidence, or calling in hypothesis to supply its place. I have shown at so great length the applicability of this method in both respects, in reference to the central subject of Isaiah's whole writings—the Holy One of Israel — that I may best leave the reader to follow it out through the other kindred subjects of which these last twenty-six chapters treat, venturing to assure him that he will find it hold good

in these no less than in that. The sinful state of the nation, and its punishment by exile to Babylon; the destruction of the oppressor, and deliverance of the captives; the restoration of the nation not merely to outward prosperity, but to, and by, a spiritual life sustained by the constant presence of their LORD, while the irreclaimable are cast out that they may no longer pollute the renewed people; and the extension of this regenerated society, till it grows from a chosen nation into an universal Church, of which the LORD, the King of Israel, is the Head: — all these, in their various aspects, and with the means by which they are to be brought about, the diligent student will find set forth by Isaiah as they rose before him in vision; while at the same time he will be able to trace into its details the evidence that this vision, in all its parts, had its counterpart in the events of the prophet's own times, and that it was his insight into the meaning of that actual world, which made possible to him, and makes intelligible to us, his foresight into the ideal: — ideal to him, but actual to us who are 'no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the LORD: in whom we also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*'

Authentic history has preserved no account of the death of Isaiah: but there is no improbability in the Jewish tradition that he was one of the martyrs whose 'innocent blood Manasseh shed, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other' †, and that the mode of his death was by being sawn asunder, to which the Christian fathers understood reference to be made in Hebrews xi. 37. If Isaiah was twenty years old when he began his ministry, in the last year of the reign of Uzziah, he would have been eighty at the death of Hezekiah. Hengstenberg supposes these latter prophecies to have been written in the days of Manasseh; and it must be admitted that there is one passage at least in them, which supports this view,

* Ephesians, ii. 19—22.

† 2 Kings, xxi. 16.

—chap. lvi. 9. to lvii. 12.,—both in its general picture of the state of society, and in the allusion to the death of the righteous, as taking him away from the evil to come, which cannot but remind us of Hezekiah, and his melancholy consolation that there should be peace and truth in his days. But political and social changes are not made in a moment; and coming events would have cast their shadows on the last days of Hezekiah and Isaiah, and have made this language suitable in the mouth of the prophet, even though we should prefer to believe that he, as well as the king, was spared the actual sight of the evil. To the objection that, if Isaiah had written in the days of Manasseh, that king's name would have appeared with the others in the title of the Book, it might be replied that death must always prevent an author from putting the very last stroke to the collection of his works; and it might even be argued that there are other indications that such last finish is wanting in the minor arrangements of these twenty-six chapters. But it is unnecessary to refine so much, when we cannot get at certainty after all. The last days, like the last words, of the prophet, pass from the actual into the ideal; and whether the final act of his life was, like its whole previous course, a surrender of himself to suffer for his people, or whether he was permitted a foretaste, in the repose of an honoured death-bed, of the eternal rest that awaited him when all his worldly task was done, he was secure in the covenant, and promise, which he had habitually realised for himself, while he declared them to others:—

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,
And thy health shall spring forth speedily:
And thy righteousness shall go before thee;
The glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.
Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer,
Thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am.

And thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour,
And thy Redeemer the mighty One of Jacob.
For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver,
And for wood brass, and for stones iron:
And I will make thy government peace,
And thy rulers righteousness.

Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,
Wasting nor destruction within thy borders ;
But thou shalt call thy walls, Salvation ; and thy gates, Praise.
The sun shall be no more thy light by day,
Neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee.
But the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light,
And thy God thy glory.
Thy sun shall no more go down,
Neither shall thy moon withdraw itself,
For the LORD shall be thine everlasting light,
And the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

In the interval between my writing and printing these pages, Mr. Maurice has published his Sermons on the Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament, in which he has more than once effected by a few broad strokes of genius, what I have laboured to produce by careful detail. I have not now first to acknowledge how greatly I owe to Mr. Maurice my principles and method of considering Hebrew prophecy ; but their application is my own, as indeed the differences in the midst of resemblances might show. Of this the reader may, if he pleases, find proof in the Educational Magazine for 1840, which contains, in *Letters on the Bible*, my first sketch of the views which I have now worked out, as to the historical meaning of Isaiah's prophecies, and the relation between the later and earlier parts of the book.

A P P E N D I X.

THE

ENGLISH TEXT

OF THE

BOOK OF ISAIAH.

[MY design is not, nor am I competent, to give a new and independent Trans'ation of the Prophecies of Isaiah: but I have thought it convenient for the reader of the previous pages to have the English Text for reference, within the same volume; and for this purpose I have carefully emended our Authorized Version. I have taken this Version, as it stands in that every way excellent edition—the small Paragraph Bible of the Religious Tract Society, and have gone through it with Professor Alexander's literal and critical translation, adopting one or other of the emendations there given, when there seemed no doubt: but when not satisfied with these, I have consulted the chief modern versions (many of which I had previously compared throughout): and occasionally I have ventured to prefer my own rendering of the Hebrew word.]

A P P E N D I X.

ISAIAH I.

- I THE VISION OF ISAIAH THE SON OF AMOZ, WHICH HE SAW CONCERNING JUDAH AND JERUSALEM IN THE DAYS OF UZZIAH, JOTHAM, AHAZ, AND HEZEKIAH, KINGS OF JUDAH.
- 2 HEAR, O heavens, and give ear, O earth :
For the LORD hath spoken,
I have nourished and brought up children,
And they have rebelled against me.
- 3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib :
But Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.
- 4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity,
A seed of evildoers, children that are degenerate :
They have forsaken the LORD,
They have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger,
They are gone away backward.
- 5 Why should ye be stricken any more ?
Ye will revolt more and more :
The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.
- 6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness
in it ;
But wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores :
They have not been closed, neither bound up,
Neither mollified with ointment.
- 7 Your country a waste ! your cities burned with fire !
Your land, strangers devour it before your faces,
And it is wasted, as the manner of foreign invaders is.
- 8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a shed in a vineyard,
As a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.
- 9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant,
We should have been as Sodom ; we should have been like unto
Gomorrah.
- 10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom ;
Give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.
- 11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ?
saith the LORD :
I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts ;
And I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he
goats.

- 12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at
your hand, to tread my courts ?
- 13 Bring no more vain oblations : incense is an abomination unto me ;
The new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot
away with ;
It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.
- 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth ;
They are become a burden unto me ; I am weary to bear it.
- 15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from
you :
Yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear :
Your hands are full of blood.
- 16 Wash you, make you clean ;
Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ;
- 17 Cease to do evil ; learn to do well ;
Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed,
Right the fatherless, plead for the widow.
- 18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD :
Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ;
Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.
- 19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall feed on the good of the land ;
- 20 But if ye refuse and rebel, the sword shall feed on you :
For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.
- 21 How is the faithful city become an harlot !
It was full of judgment ; righteousness lodged in it : but now mur-
derers.
- 22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water :
- 23 Thy rulers are rebels, and companions of thieves :
Every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards :
They judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow
come unto them.
- 24 Therefore saith the Lord,
The LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel,
Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine
enemies :
- 25 And I will turn my hand upon thee,
And purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin ;
- 26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first,
And thy counsellors as at the beginning :
Afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the
faithful city.
- 27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with right-
eousness.
- 28 And the destruction of the rebels and sinners shall be together,
And they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.
- 29 For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired,
And ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.
- 30 For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth,
And as a garden that hath no water.

- 31 And the strong shall become tow, and his work a spark,
And they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

II THE WORD THAT ISAIAH THE SON OF AMOZ SAW CONCERNING
JUDAH AND JERUSALEM.

- 2 And it shall come to pass in the last days,
That the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established at the
head of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills ;
And all nations shall flow unto it.
- 3 And many peoples shall go and say,
Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob ;
And he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths :
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
- 4 And he shall judge between the nations,
And shall arbitrate for many peoples :
And they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruninghooks :
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more.
- 5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.
- 6 Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob,
Because they be replenished from the East,
And are soothsayers like the Philistines,
And they please themselves in the children of strangers.
- 7 Their land also is full of silver and gold,
Neither is there any end of their treasures ;
Their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their
chariots :
- 8 Their land also is full of idols : they worship the work of their own
hands,
That which their own fingers have made :
- 9 And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth
himself :
Therefore forgive them not.
- 10 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust,
For fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.
- 11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled,
And the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down,
And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.
- 12 For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every thing proud
and lofty,
And upon every thing lifted up ; and it shall be brought low :
13 And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up,
And upon all the oaks of Bashan,

- 14 And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up,
 15 And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall,
 16 And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all images of desire.
 17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down,
 And the haughtiness of man shall be made low :
 And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.
 18 And the idols he shall utterly abolish.
 19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth,
 For fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty,
 When he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.
 20 In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold,
 Which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats ;
 21 To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks,
 For fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty,
 When he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.
 22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils :
 For wherein is he to be accounted of ?
 III For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
 Doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah
 The stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water,
 2 The mighty man, and the man of war,
 The judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the elder,
 3 The captain of fifty, and the honourable man,
 And the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.
 4 And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.
 5 And the people shall rage, man against man, and neighbour against neighbour :
 The child shall behave himself proudly against the elder,
 And the base against the honourable.
 6 When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying,
 Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand :
 7 In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer ;
 For in my house is neither bread nor clothing :
 Make me not a ruler of the people.
 8 For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen :
 Because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD,
 To provoke the eyes of his glory.
 9 The show of their countenance doth witness against them ;
 And they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not.
 Woe unto their soul ! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

- 10 Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him :
For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.
- 11 Woe unto the wicked ! it shall be ill with him :
For the reward of his hands shall be given him.
- 12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule
over them.
O my people, thy leaders cause thee to err, and destroy the way
of thy paths.
- 13 The LORD riseth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.
- 14 The LORD will enter into judgment
With the ancients of his people and the princes thereof :
For ye have eaten up the vineyard ;
The spoil of the poor is in your houses.
- 15 What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces,
And grind the faces of the poor ?
Saith the Lord God of hosts.
- 16 Moreover the LORD saith,
Because the daughters of Zion are haughty,
And walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes,
Walking and mincing as they go,
And making a tinkling with their feet :
- 17 Therefore the LORD will make bald the crown of the head of the
daughters of Zion,
And the LORD will discover their shame.
- 18 In that day the LORD will take away
The bravery of their feet-rings,
And the nets, and the crescents,
- 19 The ear-drops, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,
20 The bonnets, and the feet-chains, and the headbands,
21 And the scent-boxes, and the amulets, the rings, and nose jewels,
22 The holiday suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples,
and the purses,
- 23 The mirrors, and the fine linen, and the turbans, and the veils.
- 24 And it shall come to pass, that instead of perfume, there shall be
stench ;
And instead of a girdle, a rent ; and instead of well curled hair,
baldness ;
And instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth ;
And burning instead of beauty.
- 25 Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.
- 26 And her gates shall lament and mourn :
And she, being desolate, shall sit on the ground.
- IV And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying,
We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel :
Only let us be called by thy name ; take thou away our reproach.
- 2 In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glo-
rious,
And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely
For them that are escaped of Israel.

- 3 And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion,
And he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy,
Even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem :
- 4 When the LORD shall have washed away the filth of the daughters
of Zion,
And shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst
thereof
By the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.
- 5 And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount
Zion,
And upon her assemblies,
A cloud and smoke by day,
And the shining of a flaming fire by night :
For upon all the glory shall be a defence.
- 6 And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from
the heat,
And for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from
rain.

- V Now will I sing to my Beloved,
A song of my Beloved touching his vineyard.
My Beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill :
- 2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof,
And planted it with the choicest vine,
And built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a wine-
fat therein :
And he looked that it should bring forth grapes,
And it brought forth wild grapes.
- 3 And now, O inhabitant of Jerusalem, and man of Judah,
Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.
- 4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not
done in it ?
Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought
it forth wild grapes ?
- 5 And now go to ; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard :
I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up ;
And break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down :
- 6 And I will lay it waste : it shall not be pruned, nor digged ;
But there shall come up briers and thorns :
I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.
- 7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah his pleasant plant :
And he looked for judgment, but behold oppression ;
For righteousness, but behold a cry.
- 8 Woe unto them that join house to house,
That lay field to field, till there be no place,
And ye are left to dwell alone in the midst of the earth !
- 9 In mine ears saith the LORD of hosts,

- Of a truth many houses shall be desolate,
Even great and fair, without inhabitant.
- 10 Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath,
And an homer of seed shall yield an ephah.
- 11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning,
That they may follow strong drink :
That continue until night, till wine inflame them !
- 12 And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in
their feasts :
But they regard not the work of the LORD,
Neither consider the operation of his hands.
- 13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity,
Because they have no knowledge :
And their honourable men are famished,
And their multitude dried up with thirst.
- 14 Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth with-
out measure :
And down go their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp,
And he that rejoiceth in it.
- 15 And the mean man shall be brought down,
And the mighty man shall be humbled,
And the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled :
- 16 But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment,
And God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.
- 17 Then shall the lambs feed after their manner,
And the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.
- 18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity,
And sin as it were with a cart rope :
- 19 That say, Let him make speed,
And hasten his work, that we may see it :
And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh,
And come, that we may know it !
- 20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil ;
That put darkness for light, and light for darkness ;
That put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter !
- 21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight !
- 22 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine,
And men of strength to mingle strong drink :
- 23 Which justify the wicked for reward,
And take away the righteousness of the righteous from him !
- 24 Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble,
And the flame consumeth the chaff,
So their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up
as dust :
Because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts,
And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.
- 25 Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people,

And he hath stretched forth his hand against them,
 And hath smitten them : and the hills did tremble,
 And their carcases were as the sweepings in the midst of the streets.
 For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched
 out still.

- 26 And he hath lifted up an ensign to the nations from far,
 And hath hissed unto them from the end of the earth :
 And, behold they will come right speedily :
 27 None hath fainted nor stumbled among them ;
 None shall slumber nor sleep ;
 Neither is the girdle of their loins loosed,
 Nor the latchet of their shoes broken :
 28 Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent,
 Their horses' hoofs are counted like flint,
 And their wheels like a whirlwind :
 29 Their roaring is like that of a lioness,
 They shall roar like young lions :
 Yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey,
 And shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it.
 30 And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the
 sea :
 And if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow,
 And the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

- VI IN the year that king Uzziah died,
 I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne,
 High and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.
 2 About him stood the seraphim : each one had six wings ;
 With twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his
 feet, and with twain he did fly.
 3 And one cried unto another, and said,
 Holy ! holy ! holy ! is the LORD of hosts :
 The whole earth is full of his glory.
 4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried,
 And the house was filled with smoke.
 5 Then said I, Woe is me ! for I am undone ;
 Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a
 people of unclean lips :
 For mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.
 6 Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his
 hand,
 Which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar :
 7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said,
 Lo, this hath touched thy lips ;
 And thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.
 8 Also I heard the voice of the LORD, saying,
 Whom shall I send, and who will go for us ?
 Then said I, Here am I ; send me.

- 9 And he said, Go, and tell this people,
Hear ye indeed, but understand not ;
And see ye indeed, but perceive not.
- 10 Make the heart of this people fat,
And make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes ;
Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.
- 11 Then said I, LORD, how long ?
And he answered,
Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man,
And the land be utterly desolate,
12 And the LORD have removed men far away,
And there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.
- 13 And though a tenth part shall remain in it, even that shall be again consumed :
Yet as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves :
So the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.
-

- VII AND it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah,
That Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel,
Went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it.
- 2 And it was told in the house of David, saying,
Syria is confederate with Ephraim :
And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people,
As the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.
Then said the LORD unto Isaiah,
- 3 Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son,
At the end of the aqueduct of the upper pool,
In the highway of the fuller's field ;
- 4 And say unto him,
Take heed, and be quiet ; fear not, neither be fainthearted,
For these two tails of smoking firebrands,
For the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.
- 5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah,
Have taken evil counsel against thee, saying,
- 6 Let us go up against Judah, and vex it,
And let us make a breach therein for us,
And set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal :
- 7 Thus saith the Lord God,
It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.
- 8 For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin ;
And within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken,
that it be not a people.

9 And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son.

If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

10 Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,

11 Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God ;

Ask it either in the depth or in the height above.

12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.

13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David ;

Is it a small thing for you to weary men,

But will ye weary my God also ?

14 Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign ;

See ! a virgin, with child, and bearing a son,

And she calls his name Immanuel.

15 Butter and honey shall he eat, till he knows to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good,

The land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

17 The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house,

Days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah ;

Even the king of Assyria.

18 And it shall come to pass in that day,

That the LORD shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt,

And for the bee that is in the land of Assyria

19 And they shall come, and shall rest all of them

In the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks,

And upon all hedges, and upon all bushes.

20 In the same day shall the LORD shave with a razor that is hired,

Namely, by them beyond the River, by the king of Assyria,

The head, and the hair of the feet : and it shall also consume the beard.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day,

That a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep ;

22 And it shall come to pass,

For the abundance of milk that they shall give he shall eat butter :

For butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land.

23 And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place,

Where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings,

Shall be for briers and thorns.

24 With arrows and with bows shall men come thither ;

Because all the land shall become briers and thorns.

25 And on all hills that were digged with the hoe,

Thou shalt not go thither for fear of briers and thorns :

But it shall be for the sending forth of oxen,

And for the treading of sheep.

VIII Moreover the LORD said unto me,

Take thee a great roll, and write in it, with a man's pen,

"TO HASTE-PLUNDER—SPEED-SPOIL."

- 2 And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record,
 Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.
 3 And I went unto the prophetess ; and she conceived, and bare a son.

Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

- 4 For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother,

The riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away—before the king of Assyria.

- 5 The LORD spake also unto me again, saying,
 6 Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly,

And rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son ;

- 7 Now therefore, behold, the LORD bringeth up upon them

The waters of the River, strong and many,

Even the king of Assyria, and all his glory :

And he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks :

- 8 And he shall pass over into Judah ; he shall overflow and go over,
 He shall reach to the neck ;

And the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

- 9 Associate yourselves, O ye people,

And ye shall be broken in pieces ;

And give ear, all ye of far countries :

Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces ;

Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces ;

- 10 Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought ;
 Speak the word, and it shall not stand : for God is with us.

- 11 For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand,
 And instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people,
 Saying,—

- 12 Say ye not, A confederacy,

To all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy ;

Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

- 13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself ;

And let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

- 14 And he shall be for a sanctuary ;

But for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence

To both the houses of Israel,

For a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

- 15 And many among them shall stumble,

And fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

- 16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

- 17 And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob,

And I will look for him.

- 18 Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me
Are for signs and for wonders in Israel
From the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.
- 19 And when they shall say unto you,
Seek unto them that have familiar spirits,
And unto wizards that peep, and that mutter :
Should not a people seek unto their God ?
Should the living seek to the dead ?
- 20 To the law and to the testimony :
If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no
light in them.
- 21 And they shall pass through the land hardly bestead and hungry :
And it shall come to pass,
That when they are hungry, they shall fret themselves,
And shall curse their king and their God ;
- 22 And they shall look upward, and they shall look unto the earth ;
And behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish ;
And they shall be driven into the darkness.
- IX Yet her dimness and anguish shall not be for ever :
As the former time hath brought low the land of Zebulun and the
land of Napthali,
So the latter time shall make her glorious,
By the way of the sea, along Jordan, Galilee of the nations.
- 2 The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light :
They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death,
Upon them hath the light shined.
- 3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy :
They joy before thee as with the joy in harvest,
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
- 4 For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff laid on
his shoulder,
The rod of his task-master, as in the day of Midian.
- 5 For every warrior's greaves with their clang in battle, and his
garments rolled in blood,
Shall be for burning and food for fire.
- 6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given :
And the government shall be upon his shoulder :
And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,
The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
- 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,
Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom ;
To order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice,
From henceforth even for ever.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.
- 8 The LORD sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon
Israel.
- 9 And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitant
of Samaria,
That say in the pride and stoutness of heart,
- 10 The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones :

The sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.

- 11 And the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him,
And join his enemies together ;
- 12 The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind ;
And they shall devour Israel with open mouth.
For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.
- 13 For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them,
Neither do they seek the LORD of hosts.
- 14 Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, palm tree
and rush, in one day.
- 15 The ancient and honourable, he is the head ;
And the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.
- 16 For the leaders of this people cause them to err ;
And they that are led of them are destroyed.
- 17 Therefore the LORD shall have no joy in their young men,
Neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows :
For every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer,
And every mouth speaketh folly.
For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.
- 18 For wickedness burneth as the fire :
It shall devour the briers and thorns,
And shall kindle in the thickets of the forest,
And they shall go up in volumes of smoke.
- 19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened,
And the people shall be as the fuel of the fire :
No man shall spare his brother.
- 20 And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry ;
And he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied :
They shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm :
- 21 Manasseh, Ephraim ; and Ephraim, Manasseh :
And they together shall be against Judah.
For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.
- X Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees,
And to the scribes that prescribe oppression ;
- 2 To turn aside the needy from judgment,
And to take away the right from the poor of my people,
That widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the father-
less !
- 3 And what will ye do in the day of visitation,
And in the desolation which shall come from far ?
To whom will ye flee for help ? and where will ye leave your
glory ?
- 4 Without me, they shall bow down among the prisoners, and they
shall fall under the slain.
For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.

- 5 Woe to the Assyrian ! the rod of mine auger,
 And the staff in their hand is mine indignation.
 6 I will send him against an hypocritical nation,
 And against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge,
 To take the spoil, and to take the prey,
 And to tread them down like the mire of the streets.
 7 Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so ;
 But it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.
 8 For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings ?
 9 Is not Calno as Carchemish ? Is not Hamath as Arpad ?
 Is not Samaria as Damascus ?
 10 As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols,
 And whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of
 Samaria ;
 11 Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to
 Jerusalem and her idols ?
 12 Wherefore it shall come to pass,
 That when the LORD hath performed his whole work
 Upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem,
 I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria,
 And the glory of his high looks.
 13 For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it,
 And by my wisdom ; for I am prudent :
 And I have removed the bounds of the nations,
 And have robbed their treasures,
 And I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man :
 14 And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the nations :
 And as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth ;
 And there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth,
 or peeped.
 15 Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith ?
 Or shall the saw magnify itself against him that handleth it ?
 As if the rod should wield him that lifteth it,
 Or as if the staff should lift up the man.
 16 Therefore shall the Lord, the LORD of hosts, send among his fat
 ones leanness ;
 And under his glory he shall kindle a burning,
 Like the burning of a fire.
 17 And the light of Israel shall be for a fire,
 And his Holy One for a flame :
 And it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day ;
 18 And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field,
 both soul and body :
 And they shall be as when a sick man fainteth.
 19 And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few,
 That a child may write them down.
 20 And it shall come to pass in that day,
 That the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house
 of Jacob,
 Shall no more again stay upon him that smote them ;

But shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy one of Israel, in truth.

21 The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

22 For though thy people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea,
Only a remnant of them shall return :

The consumption is decreed, and full justice shall be poured out.

23 For the Lord God of hosts is making a consumption, even as he hath determined,

In the midst of all the land.

24 Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts,

O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian
He shall smite thee with a rod,

And shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt ;

25 But yet a very little while, and the indignation shall have ceased,
And mine anger shall have destroyed them.

26 And the LORD of hosts shall raise up a scourge for him,

As in the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb :

And his rod shall be again upon the sea, and he shall lift it up
after the manner of Egypt.

27 And it shall come to pass in that day,

That his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder,

And his yoke from off thy neck,

And the yoke shall be destroyed from off the anointed one.

28 He is come to Aiath, he is passed through Migron ;

At Michmash he hath laid up his baggage :

29 They have passed the Pass : they have taken up their night-quarters
at Geba ;

Ramah is afraid ; Gibeah of Saul is fled.

30 Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim :

Hear O Laish, answer her Anathoth.

31 Madmenah has gone away ; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee.

32 He yet halts at Nob a day :

He shakes his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

33 Behold the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth lop the bough
with terror :

And the high ones of stature are hewn down, and the haughty humbled.

34 And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron,

And Lebanon shall fall by a mighty hand.

XI And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stem of Jesse,
And a branch shall grow out of his roots :

2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,

The spirit of wisdom and understanding,

The spirit of counsel and might,

The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD :

3 And he shall be of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD :

And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes,

- Neither reprove after the hearing of his ears :
- 4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor,
And reprove with equity for the meek of the earth :
And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,
And with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
- 5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,
And faithfulness the girdle of his reins.
And the wolf shall make his home with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid :
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ;
And a little child shall lead them.
- 7 And the cow and the she bear shall feed together ;
Together shall their young ones lie down :
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- 9 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,
And the weaned child shall put his hand on the den of the crested
adder.
- 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain :
For the earth is full of the knowledge of the LORD,
As the waters cover the sea.
- 10 And in that day shall the root of Jesse stand for an ensign
to the peoples ;
To it shall the nations seek : and his dwelling-place shall be glorious.
- 11 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the LORD shall set his hand again the second time
To recover the remnant of his people which shall be left,
From Assyria, and from Egypt,
And from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam,
And from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the
sea.
- 12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations,
And shall assemble the outcast sons of Israel,
And gather together the dispersed daughters of Judah,
From the four corners of the earth.
- 13 The envy also of Ephraim shall depart,
And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off :
Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.
- 14 But they shall sweep down upon the shoulders of the Philistines
towards the sea ;
They shall spoil the children of the east together :
They shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab,
And the children of Ammon shall obey them.
- 15 And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea ;
And with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the River,
And shall smite it into seven streams,
And make men go over dryshod.
- 16 And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which
shall be left, from Assyria ;
Like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land
of Egypt.

- XII And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee ;
 Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away,
 And thou comfortest me.
- 2 Behold, GOD is my salvation ; I will trust and not be afraid :
 For the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song ;
 He also is become my salvation.
- 3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.
- 4 And in that day shall ye say,
 Praise the LORD, call upon his name,
 Declare his doings among the nations,
 Make mention that his name is exalted.
- 5 Sing unto the LORD ; for he hath done excellent things :
 This is known in all the earth.
- 6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitress of Zion :
 For great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.
-

XIII THE BURDEN OF BABYLON WHICH ISAIAH THE SON OF AMOZ
 DID SEE.

- 2 Lift ye up a banner upon the bare mountain !
 Exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand,
 That they may go into the gates of the nobles !
- 3 I have commanded my consecrated ones,
 I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger,
 My warriors that rejoiced in their pride.
- 4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great
 people ;
 The noise of a tumult of kingdoms of nations gathered together !
 The LORD of hosts mustering the host of battle !
- 5 They come from a far country, from the end of heaven,
 The LORD and the weapons of his indignation,
 To destroy the whole land.
- 6 Howl ye ; for the day of the LORD is at hand ;
 It shall come as a mighty stroke from the Almighty.
- 7 Therefore shall all hands fall down, and every man's heart shall
 melt :
- 8 And they shall be afraid : pangs and sorrows shall take hold of
 them :
 They shall writhe with pain as a woman that travaileth ;
 They shall stand aghast, every man at his neighbour,
 Their faces shall be as flames.
- 9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh,
 Cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate :
 And he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.
- 10 For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give
 their light :
 The sun is darkened in his going forth,
 And the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

- 11 And I will visit upon the world its evil, and upon the wicked their iniquity ;
 And I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease,
 And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.
- 12 I will make a man more precious than fine gold ;
 Even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.
- 13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place,
 In the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.
- 14 And it shall be that as the chased roe, and as sheep with none to gather them,
 They shall every man turn to his own people,
 And flee every one into his own land.
- 15 Every one that is overtaken shall be thrust through ;
 And all that are rallied together shall fall by the sword.
- 16 And their children shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes ;
 Their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.
- 17 Behold I am stirring up the Medes against them,
 Which shall not regard silver, and as for gold, they shall not delight in it.
- 18 Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces ;
 And they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb ;
 Their eye shall not spare children.
- 19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency,
 Shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 20 It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation :
 Neither shall the Arab pitch tent there ;
 Neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.
- 21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there ;
 And their houses shall be full of yellings ;
 And the daughters of the ostrich shall dwell there,
 And wild goats shall dance there ;
- 22 And wolves shall howl in their palaces,
 And jackals in their pleasure houses :
 And her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.
- XIV For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob,
 And will yet choose Israel,
 And cause them to rest in their own land :
 And the strangers shall be joined with them, and shall cleave to the house of Jacob.
- 2 And the nations shall take them, and bring them to their place :
 And the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids :
 And they shall take them captives, whose captives they were ;
 And they shall rule over their oppressors.
- 3 And it shall come to pass,

- In the day that the LORD shall give thee rest
 From thy sorrow, and from thy fear,
 And from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,
 4 That thou shalt raise this song over the king of Babylon, and say,
 How hath the oppressor ceased ! the golden city ceased !
 5 The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, the sceptre of the
 rulers ;
 6 Which struck the peoples in wrath with a continual stroke,
 Which ruled the nations in anger, with a persecution that none
 hindered.
 7 The whole earth is at rest, is quiet : they break forth into singing.
 8 Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying,
 Now that thou art laid down, no feller shall come up against us.
 9 Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming :
 It stirreth up the giant-shades for thee, all the chief ones of the
 earth ;
 It hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.
 10 All they shall speak and say unto thee,
 Art thou also become weak as we ? art thou become like unto us ?
 11 Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols :
 The worm is spread under thee, and the earth-worms cover thee.
 12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning !
 How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the
 nations !
 13 For thou hast said in thine heart,
 I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars
 of God :
 I will sit also upon the mount of assembly, in the uttermost north :
 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds ; I will be like the
 Most High.
 15 But thou shalt be only brought down to hell, to the uttermost pit.
 16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider
 thee, saying,
 Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake
 kingdoms ;
 17 That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities
 thereof ;
 That loosed not his prisoners homewards ?
 18 All the kings of the nations, all of them, lie in state, every one in
 his own house :
 19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch,
 And as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a
 sword,
 That go down to the stones of the pit ; as a carcase trodden under
 feet.
 20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial,
 Because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people :
 The seed of evil doers shall be named no more for ever.
 21 Prepare slaughter for his children, for the iniquity of their fathers ;

That they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.

- 22 For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts,
And cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant,
And the son, and the son's son, saith the LORD.
- 23 I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, and pools of water:
And I will sweep it with the besom of destruction :
The LORD of hosts hath said it.
- 24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying,
Surely as I have thought, so hath it come to pass ;
And as I have purposed, so shall it stand :
- 25 To break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains I will tread him under foot :
Then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.
- 26 This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth :
And this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.
- 27 For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it ?
And it is his hand that is stretched out, and who shall turn it back ?
-

28 IN THE YEAR THAT KING AHAZ DIED WAS THIS BURDEN.

- 29 Rejoice not thou, whole Philistia,
Because the rod of him that smote thee is broken :
For out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice,
And his fruit shall be a fiery dragon.
- 30 And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety :
And I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.
- 31 Howl, O gate ; Cry, O city ; thou, whole Philistia, art dissolved :
For there cometh from the north a smoke,
And there is no straggler in his hosts.
- 32 What shall one then answer the messengers of the nations ?
That the LORD hath founded Zion,
And the poor of his people shall take refuge in it.
-

XV

THE BURDEN OF MOAB.

- Verily in the night Ar-Moab is laid waste, is brought to silence!
Verily in the night Kir-Moab is laid waste, is brought to silence!
- 2 He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep :
Moab doth howl over Nebo, and over Medeba :
On all their heads baldness, and every beard cut off!
- 3 In their streets they gird themselves with sackcloth :
On the tops of their houses, and in their squares,
Every one doth howl, weeping abundantly.

- 4 And Heshbon doth cry, and Elealeh : their voice is heard even unto Jahaz :
Therefore the armed soldiers of Moab cry out ;
His life is grievous unto him.
- 5 My heart crieth out for Moab ;
His fugitives flee unto Zoar, like an heifer of three years old :
For by the ascent of Luhith they go up with weeping ;
For in the way of Horonaim they raise a broken cry.
- 6 For the waters of Nimrim are desolate :
For the grass is withered, the young herbage faileth, there is no green thing.
- 7 Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up,
Do they carry away over the brook of the willows.
- 8 For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab ;
The howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beer-elim.
- 9 For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood : for I will bring more upon Dimon,
Lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.

XVI Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land,

- From Selah through the wilderness,
Unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.
- 2 For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest,
So the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.
- 3 Take counsel, execute judgment ;
Make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday ;
Hide the outcasts ; betray not the fugitive.
- 4 Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab ;
Be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler :
For the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth,
The oppressors are consumed out of the land.
- 5 And in mercy shall the throne be established :
And one shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David,
Judging, and seeking justice, and hasting righteousness.
- 6 We have heard the pride of Moab, the very proud ;
His haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath, — his lying boasts.
- 7 Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, all of it shall howl :
For the foundations of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn ;
Surely they are stricken.
- 8 For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah :
The lords of the nations break down the principal plants thereof,
They reached unto Jazer, they strayed into the wilderness :
Her branches were stretched out, they went over the sea.
- 9 Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah :
I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh :
For the battle-shout is fallen on thy summer fruits and thy harvest.

- 10 And gladness is taken away, and joy from the plentiful field;
And in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there
be shouting:
The treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses;
I have made their vintage shouting to cease.
- 11 Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab,
And mine inward parts for Kir-haresh.
- 12 And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on
the high place,
That he shall come to his sanctuary to pray;
But he shall not prevail.
- 13 This is the word that the LORD spake concerning Moab of old.
- 14 But now the LORD hath spoken, saying,
Within three years, as the years of an hireling,
And the glory of Moab shall be put to shame,
With all that great multitude;
And the remnant shall be very small and feeble.

XVII

THE BURDEN OF DAMASCUS.

- Behold Damascus is taken away from being a city,
And it shall be a ruinous heap.
- 2 The cities of Aroer are forsaken:
They shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall
make them afraid.
- 3 The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim,
And the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria:
They shall be as the glory of the children of Israel,
Saith the LORD of hosts.
- 4 And in that day it shall come to pass,
That the glory of Jacob shall be made thin,
And the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.
- 5 And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn,
And reapeth the ears with his arm;
And it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.
- 6 Yet gleanings shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree;
Two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough,
Four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof,
Saith the LORD God of Israel.
- 7 At that day shall a man look to his Maker,
And his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.
- 8 And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands,
Neither shall respect that which his fingers have made,
Either the images of Astarte, or the pillars of the Sun.
- 9 In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough,
And an uppermost branch,
Which they leave because of the children of Israel:
And there shall be desolation.
- 10 Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation,

And hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength,
Therefore thou mayest plant pleasant plants,
And mayest set slips from a foreign soil ;

- 11 In the day mayest thou make thy plant to grow,
And in the morning mayest thou make thy seed to flourish ;
But away flies the crop in the day of harvest,
And thou shalt have hopeless sorrow.

- 12 O the noise of many peoples, they make a noise like the noise
of the seas ;
And the rush of nations, they rush like the rushing of mighty
waters !

- 13 The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters ;
But He shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off,
And shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind,
And like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

- 14 And behold at eveningtide trouble ;
And before the morning he is not.
This is the portion of them that spoil us,
And the lot of them that rob us.

XVIII O land rustling with wings, which borders on the rivers of
Ethiopia :

- 2 That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in bulrush boats upon
the waters,
Saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation outspread and fierce,
To a people terrible from their beginning hitherto ;
A nation that meteth out and treadeth down, whose land the
rivers divide !

- 3 All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth,
Shall see as it were the lifting up of an ensign on the mountains ;
And shall hear as it were the blowing of a trumpet.

- 4 For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest,
And I will look on in my dwelling-place,
Like a clear heat upon herbage, and like a cloud of dew in the
heat of harvest.

- 5 For afore the harvest, when the bloom is finished,
And the flower becomes a ripening grape,
He shall cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks,
And take away and cut down the branches.

- 6 They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and
to the beasts of the earth :
And the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the
earth shall winter upon them.

- 7 In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts,
Of a people outspread and fierce,
And from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto ;
A nation that meteth out and treadeth under foot ;
Whose land the rivers divide ;
To the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.

XIX

THE BURDEN OF EGYPT.

- BEHOLD, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud,
 And cometh into Egypt :
 And the idols of Egypt are moved at his presence, ||
 And the heart of Egypt doth melt within him.
- 2 And I will set Egypt against Egypt :
 And they shall fight every one against his brother,
 And every one against his neighbour ;
 City against city, and kingdom against kingdom.
- 3 And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof ;
 And I will destroy the counsel thereof :
 And they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers,
 And to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.
- 4 And the Egyptians will I shut up in the hand of a hard lord ;
 And a stern king shall rule over them ;
 Saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.
- 5 And the waters shall fail from the sea,
 And the river shall be wasted and dried up.
- 6 And the rivers shall become putrid :
 And the canals of Egypt shall be emptied and dried up :
 The reeds and flags shall wither.
- 7 The meadows by the River, by the border of the River,
 And every thing sown by the River, shall wither, be driven away,
 and be no more.
- 8 The fishers also shall mourn,
 And all they that cast angle into the River shall lament,
 And they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.
- 9 And the workers in combed flax, and the weavers of white linen,
 shall be confounded.
- 10 And the pillars of the land are broken down,
 And all her labouring men are grieved in heart.
- 11 The princes of Zoan are utterly foolish,
 The counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish :
 How say ye unto Pharaoh,
 I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings ?
- 12 Where are they ? where are thy wise men ?
 And let them tell thee now, and let them know
 What the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.
- 13 The princes of Zoan are become fools,
 The princes of Noph are deceived ;
 They have also misled Egypt, they that are the heads of her tribes.
- 14 The LORD hath mingled a spirit of reeling in the midst of them :
 And they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof,
 As a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.
- 15 Neither shall there be any work for Egypt,
 Which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do.
- 16 In that day shall Egypt be like unto women :
 And it shall be afraid, and fear,
 From before the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts,
 Which he shaketh over it.

- 17 And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt,
Every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself,
Because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts,
Which he hath determined against it.
- 18 In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the
language of Canaan,
And swear to the LORD of hosts;
One shall be called, The city of destruction.
- 19 In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD
In the midst of the land of Egypt,
And a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD.
- 20 And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts
in the land of Egypt:
For they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors,
And he shall send them a saviour, and a great one,
And he shall deliver them.
- 21 And the LORD shall be known to Egypt,
And the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day,
And shall do sacrifice and oblation;
And shall vow vows unto the LORD, and perform them.
- 22 And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it:
And they shall return to the LORD,
And he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them.
- 23 In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria,
And the Assyrian shall come into Egypt,
And the Egyptian into Assyria,
And Egypt shall serve the LORD with Assyria.
- 24 In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with
Assyria,
- 25 A blessing in the midst of the earth:
Whom the LORD of hosts hath blessed, saying,
Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands,
And Israel mine inheritance.

-
- XX In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod,
When Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,
And fought against Ashdod, and took it;
- 2 At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz,
Saying, Go, and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins,
And put off thy shoe from thy foot.
And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.
- 3 And the LORD said,
Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot,
A three years sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia;
- 4 So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners,
and the Ethiopians captives,
Young and old, naked and barefoot,

- Even with their hind-parts uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.
 5 And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation,
 and of Egypt their glory.
 6 And the inhabitants of this coast shall say in that day,
 Behold, such is our expectation, whither we fled for help,
 To be delivered from the king of Assyria:
 And how shall we escape?
-

XXI THE BURDEN OF THE DESERT OF THE SEA.

- As whirlwinds in the south sweep along;
 So it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land!
 2 A grievous vision is declared unto me;
 The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler
 spoileth.
 Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media:
 All the sighing thereof have I made to cease.
 3 Therefore are my loins filled with pain:
 Pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that
 travaileth:
 I writhe so that I cannot hear; I shudder so that I cannot see.
 4 My heart panteth, fearfulness affrighteth me:
 The night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.
 5 Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink:
 Arise, ye princes, anoint the shield!
 6 For thus hath the LORD said unto me,
 Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.
 7 And he saw cavalry, horsemen two and two,
 Riders on asses, riders on camels;
 8 And he hearkened diligently with much heed: and he cried, A lion!
 O Lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime,
 And I am set in my ward whole nights:
 9 And, behold, here come mounted men, horsemen two and two.
 And he spake again, and said,
 Babylon is fallen, is fallen;
 And all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the
 ground.
 10 O my threshing, and the corn of my floor:
 That which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel,
 have I declared unto you.
 One calleth to me out of Seir,
 Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?
 12 The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night:
 If ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come again.
 In the thickets in Arabia shall ye lodge,
 O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.
 14 The inhabitants of the land of Tema bring water to him that is
 thirsty,
 They come to meet the fugitive with bread.

The Bur-
den of
Dumah.

The Bur-
den upon
Arabia.

- 15 For they flee from the face of the swords, from the drawn sword,
And from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.
- 16 For thus saith the LORD unto me,
Within a year, according to the years of an hireling,
And all the glory of Kedar shall fail :
- 17 And the residue of the number of archers,
The mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall become few :
For the LORD GOD of Israel hath spoken it.
-

XXII

THE BURDEN OF THE VALLEY OF VISION.

- WHAT aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the
housetops,
- 2 Thou City full of stirs, a tumultuous, joyous city ?
Thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.
- 3 All thy princes are fled together, they are bound by the archers :
All that are found in thee are bound together, which have fled afar.
- 4 Therefore say I, Look away from me ;
I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me,
Because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.
- 5 For there is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity,
From the Lord GOD of hosts, in the valley of vision,
Of breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.
- 6 And Elam bears the quiver, with chariots, infantry, and horsemen,
And Kir uncovereth the shield.
- 7 And it hath come to pass, that thy choicest valleys are full of
chariots,
And the horsemen have set themselves in array at the gate,
- 8 And the veil of Judah is torn away.
And thou hast looked in this day to the armour of the house of
the forest :
- 9 And ye have seen to the breaches of the city of David, that they
are many :
And ye have gathered together the waters of the lower pool :
- 10 And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem,
And the houses have ye broken down to repair the wall.
- 11 And ye have made a reservoir between the Two Walls,
For the water of the old pool :
But ye have not looked unto Him who hath done this,
Neither seen Him who purposed it long ago.
- 12 And in this day doth the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and
to mourning,
And to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth :
- 13 And behold mirth and jollity,
Slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine :
Let us eat and drink ; for to-morrow we shall die.
- 14 And the LORD of hosts hath revealed himself in mine ears,

Surely this iniquity shall not be expiated by you till ye die,
Saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

- 15 Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts,
Go, get thee unto this treasurer,
Unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say,
- 16 What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here?
That thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here,—
Hewing him out a sepulchre on high!
Graving an habitation for himself in a rock!
- 17 Behold the LORD will quickly cast thee down, O man,
- 18 Seizing thee, and rolling thee together like a ball,
And violently tossing thee like a ball into a wide country;
There shalt thou die, and there shall go the chariots of thy glory,
Thou shame of thy lord's house.
- 19 And I will drive thee from thy station,
And from thy state thou shalt be pulled down.
- 20 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:
- 21 And I will clothe him with thy robe,
And strengthen him with thy girdle,
And I will commit thy government into his hand:
And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to
the house of Judah.
- 22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder;
And he shall open, and none shall shut;
And he shall shut, and none shall open.
- 23 And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place;
And he shall be for a glorious support to his father's house.
- 24 And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house,
the offspring and the issue,
Every small vessel, from cups to flagons of every kind.
- 25 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts,
Shall the nail fastened in the sure place be removed,
And be cut down, and fall;
And the burden that was upon it shall be cut off:
For the LORD hath spoken it.

XXIII

THE BURDEN OF TYRE.

- Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste!
There is no house, no entering in:
From the land of Chittim it is made known to them.
- 2 Be silent, ye inhabitants of the Isle;
Thou whom the merchants of Sidon have replenished,
 - 3 And whose revenue is by great waters,
The seed of the Nile, the harvest of the river,
And she is a mart of nations.
 - 4 Be thou ashamed, O Sidon: for the sea hath spoken,
Even the Stronghold of the sea, saying,

- I travail not, nor bring forth children,
 Neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins.
- 5 As at the report concerning Egypt,
 So shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.
- 6 Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the Isle.
- 7 Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days?
 Her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.
- 8 Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the dispenser of
 crowns,
 Whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable
 of the earth?
- 9 The LORD of hosts hath purposed it:
 To stain the pride of all glory,
 And to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.
- 10 Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish:
 Thy bounds are no more.
- 11 He hath stretched out his hand over the sea, he hath shaken the
 kingdoms:
 The LORD hath given a commandment against Canaan,
 To destroy the strongholds thereof.
- 12 And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice,
 O thou dishonoured virgin, daughter of Sidon:
 Arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest.
- 13 Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not,
 Till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness:
 They set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces
 thereof;
 And these have brought her to ruin.
- 14 Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your stronghold is laid waste.
- 15 And it shall come to pass in that day,
 That Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days
 of one king:
 After the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.
- 16 Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been
 forgotten;
 Make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be re-
 membered.
- 17 And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years,
 That the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire,
 And shall play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world upon
 the face of the earth.
- 18 And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD:
 It shall not be treasured nor laid up;
 For her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the
 LORD,
 To eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

XXIV BEHOLD, the LORD poureth the earth out, and maketh it
 empty

- And turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.
- 2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest;
 As with the servant, so with his master;
 As with the maid, so with her mistress;
 As with the buyer, so with the seller;
 As with the lender, so with the borrower;
 As with the creditor, so with the debtor.
- 3 The land is utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.
- 4 The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away:
 The haughty people of the earth do languish.
- 5 The land also is defiled under its inhabitants;
 Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance,
 Broken the everlasting covenant.
- 6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth,
 And they that dwell therein are punished:
 Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.
- 7 The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merry-hearted do sigh.
- 8 The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth,
 The joy of the harp ceaseth.
 They shall not drink wine with a song;
 Strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.
- 10 The city of confusion is broken down:
 Every house is shut up, that no man may come in.
- 11 There is a crying for wine in the streets;
 All joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.
- 12 Desolation is left in the city, and the gate is smitten with ruin.
- 13 For so it shall be in the midst of the land, among the peoples,
 As the shaking of an olive tree,
 As the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.
- 14 They shall lift up their voice,
 They shall sing for the majesty of the LORD,
 They shall cry aloud from the sea.
- 15 Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the land of the sunrise,
 The name of the LORD GOD of Israel in the isles of the sea.
- 16 From the ends of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the Righteous.
 But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me!
 The treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously:
 Yea the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.
- 17 Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.
- 18 And it shall come to pass,
 That he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit;

And he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare :

For the windows from on high are opened, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

19 The earth is broken, broken up ; the earth is shattered, all shattered ;

The earth doth quake, doth quake exceedingly ;

20 The earth doth reel, doth reel like a drunken man,

And swayeth to and fro like a hammock ;

And her transgression is heavy upon her ;

And she shall fall, and not rise again.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day,

That the LORD shall come to judge the host of the high ones that are on high,

And the kings of the earth upon the earth.

22 And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the dungeon,

And shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.

23 And the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed,

For the LORD of hosts doth reign in Mount Zion,

And in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

XXV O LORD, thou art my God ; I will exalt thee,

I will praise thy name ;

For thou hast done wonderful things ;

Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

2 For thou hast made of a city an heap ;

Of a defenced city a ruin :

A palace of strangers to be no city ; it shall never be built again.

3 Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee,

The city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.

4 For thou hast been a stronghold to the poor,

A stronghold to the needy in his distress ;

A refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat,

When the blast of the terrible ones is like a storm against the wall.

Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a drought ;

As the heat with the shadow of a cloud,

The song of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all peoples

A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees,

Of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all peoples,

And the veil that is spread over all nations . .

8 He will swallow up death in victory ;

And the LORD GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces ;

And the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth ;

For the LORD hath spoken it.

- 9 And it shall be said in that day,
Lo, this is our GOD ; we have waited for him, and he will save us :
This is the LORD ; we have waited for him,
We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.
- 10 For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest,
And Moab shall be trodden down under him,
As straw is trodden down in the water of the dunghill.
- 11 And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of it,
As he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim :
And He shall bring down their pride,
Together with the spoils of their hands.
- 12 And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring
down,
Lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.

- XXVI In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah ;
We have a strong city ; salvation will GOD appoint for walls and
bulwarks.
- 2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the
truth may enter in.
 - 3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on
thee :
Because he trusteth in thee.
 - 4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever : for in the LORD JEHOVAH is an
everlasting rock :
 - 5 For he bringeth down them that dwell on high ;
The lofty city, he layeth it low ;
He layeth it low, even to the ground ; he bringeth it even to the
dust.
 - 6 The foot shall tread it down, the feet of the poor, the steps of the
needy.
 - 7 The way of the just is straight : thou, Most Upright, dost level the
path of the just.
 - 8 Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for
thee ;
The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of
thee.
 - 9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night ;
Yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early :
For when thy judgments are in the earth,
The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.
 - 10 Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn
righteousness :
In the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly,
And will not behold the majesty of the LORD.
 - 11 LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see :
But they shall see, and be ashamed at thy zeal for thy people ;
Yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.
 - 12 LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us :
For thou hast wrought even all our works for us.

- 13 O LORD our GOD, other lords beside thee have had dominion
over us :
But by thee only will we make mention of thy name.
- 14 They are dead, they shall not live ; they are shades, they shall
not rise :
Therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them,
And made all their memory to perish.
- 15 Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD,
Thou hast increased the nation : thou hast glorified thyself :
Thou hadst enlarged all the borders of the land.
- 16 LORD, in trouble have they visited thee,
They poured out a whispered prayer, thy chastening was upon
them.
- 17 As a woman with child, when she draweth near the time of her
delivery,
Is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs ; so have we been in thy
sight, O LORD.
- 18 We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it
were brought forth wind ;
We have not wrought any deliverance in the earth ;
Neither are the inhabitants of the world born.
- 19 Thy dead shall live, my dead bodies shall arise :
Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust :
For thy dew is as the dew of herbs,
And the earth shall bring forth the dead.
- 20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers,
And shut thy doors about thee :
Hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be over-
past.
- 21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place,
To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity :
And the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover
her slain.

- XXVII In that day the LORD, with his sore and great and strong
sword,
Shall punish leviathan the fleet serpent,
Even leviathan that coiled serpent ;
And he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.
- 2 In that day sing ye unto her,
A vineyard of wine : —
- 3 I the LORD do keep it : I will water it every moment :
Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.
- 4 Fury is not in me : who would set the briars and thorns against
me in battle ?
I would go through them, I would burn them together.
- 5 Or let him take hold of my strength,
Let him make peace with me ; let him make peace with me.
- 6 In the coming time Jacob shall take root :
Israel shall bud and blossom, and fill the face of the world with
fruit.

- 7 Hath He smitten him, as He smote those that smote him ?
Is he slain with the slaughter of their slain ?
- 8 In measure, by sending her away, thou dost contend with her :
He driveth her away by his rough wind in the day of the east
wind.
- 9 By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged ;
And this is all its fruit :—to take away his sin,
To break all the stones of the altar in pieces like chalkstones,
And to raise up the images of Astarte, and of the Sun, no more.
- 10 For the defenced city shall be desolate,
The habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness :
There shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down,
And consume the branches thereof.
- 11 When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off :
The women come, and burn them up :
For it is a people of no understanding :
Therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them,
And he that formed them will show them no favour.
- 12 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the LORD shall gather in his fruit
From the channel of the River unto the stream of Egypt,
And ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.
- 13 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the great trumpet shall be blown,
And they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of
Assyria,
And the outcasts in the land of Egypt,
And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

- XXVIII WOE to the crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim,
And to the fading flower of his glorious beauty,
Which are on the head of the fat valley of them that are over-
come with wine !
- 2 Behold, the LORD hath a mighty and strong one,
Which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm,
As a flood of mighty waters overflowing, hath cast it down to the
earth with the hand.
- 3 The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden
under feet :
- 4 And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley,
Shall be a fading flower, and as the early fruit before the summer ;
Which when he that looketh upon it seeth,
While it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.
- 5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory,
And for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,
- 6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment,
And for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.
- 7 But they also have erred through wine,
And through strong drink are out of the way ;

- The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink,
 They are swallowed up of wine,
 They are out of the way through strong drink ;
 They err in vision, they stumble in judgment.
- 8 For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness,
 So that there is no place clean.
- 9 "Whom will he teach knowledge? and whom will he make to
 understand doctrine?
 "Them that are weaned from the milk, and taken from the
 breasts?
- 10 "It is precept upon precept, precept upon precept ;
 "Line upon line, line upon line ; here a little, and there a little."
- 11 Yea, with stammering lips and another tongue
 Will He speak to this people,
- 12 Who said to them,
 This is the rest : cause the weary to rest ; and this is the refreshing ;
 But they would not hear.
- 13 And the word of the LORD is unto them
 Precept upon precept, precept upon precept ;
 Line upon line, line upon line ; here a little, there a little ;
 That they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared,
 and taken.
- 14 Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men,
 That rule this people which is in Jerusalem.
- 15 Because ye have said,
 We have made a covenant with death,
 And with hell are we at agreement ;
 When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come
 unto us :
 For we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we
 hid ourselves :
- 16 Therefore thus saith the Lord God,
 Behold, I have laid in Zion a foundation stone,
 A tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation :
 He that believeth shall not make haste.
- 17 And I will set judgment for the line, and righteousness for the
 plummet :
 And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies,
 And the waters shall overflow the hiding place.
- 18 And your covenant with death shall be disannulled,
 And your agreement with hell shall not stand ;
 When the overflowing scourge shall pass through,
 Then ye shall be trodden down by it.
- 19 And as often as it passeth through, it shall take you :
 For morning by morning shall it pass through, by day and by
 night :
 And affliction alone will make you understand doctrine.
- 20 For the bed is too short to stretch oneself :
 And the covering too narrow to wrap oneself.
- 21 For the LORD shall rise up as in Mount Perazim,

- He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon,
 That he may do his work, his strange work ;
 And bring to pass his act, his strange act.
- 22 Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong :
 For I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption,
 Even determined upon the whole land.
- 23 Give ye ear, and hear my voice ; hearken, and hear my speech.
 24 Is the ploughman always ploughing in order to sow ?
 Doth he open and break the clods of his ground ?
 25 When he hath made plain the face thereof,
 Doth he not cast abroad the dill, and scatter the cummin,
 And sow the wheat in rows, and the barley in the appointed place,
 And the rye in his border ?
 26 For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.
 27 For the dill is not threshed with the corn-sledge,
 Neither is the cart wheel turned about upon the cummin ;
 But the dill is beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.
 28 Bread corn is bruised ; yet he is not always threshing it,
 Nor breaking it with the wheel of his cart,
 Nor bruising it with his horses.
 29 This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts,
 Who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

- XXIX Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt !
 Add ye year to year ; let the festivals go round.
- 2 Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow :
 And it shall be unto me as Ariel.
- 3 And I will camp against thee round about,
 And will lay siege against thee with a mount,
 And I will raise forts against thee.
- 4 And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground,
 And thy speech shall be low out of the dust,
 And thy voice shall be like that of a spirit out of the ground,
 And thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.
- 5 And the multitude of thy foreign invaders shall be like small dust,
 And the multitude of the terrible ones as passing chaff :
 Yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.
- 6 Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts
 With thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise,
 With storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.
- 7 And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel,
 Even all that fight against her and her bulwarks, and that distress her,
 Shall be as a dream of a night vision.
- 8 It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold,
 he eateth ;
 But he awaketh, and his soul is empty :
 Or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh ;

But he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul craveth :
So shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against
mount Zion.

- 9 Waver, and wonder ; be merry, and blind :
They are drunken, but not with wine ;
They stagger, but not with strong drink.
- 10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep,
And hath closed your eyes :
The prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.
- 11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a sealed
writing,
Which men deliver to one that knows letters, saying,
Read this, I pray thee :
And he saith, I cannot ; for it is sealed :
- 12 And the book is delivered to him that knows not letters, saying,
Read this, I pray thee :
And he saith, I know not letters.
- 13 Wherefore the Lord hath said,
Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth,
And with their lips do honour me,
But have removed their heart far from me,
And their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men :
- 14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among
this people,
Even a marvellous work and a wonder ;
For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,
And the understanding of their prudent men shall hide itself for
shame.
- 15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the
LORD,
And their works are in the dark,
And they say, Who seeth us ? and who knoweth us ?
- 16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as
the potter's clay :
For shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not ?
Or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it,
He had no understanding ?
- 17 Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into
a fruitful field,
And the fruitful field shall be reckoned to the forest ?
- 18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book,
And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of
darkness.
- 19 The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD,
And the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.
- 20 For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner ceaseth,
And all that watch for iniquity are cut off :
- 21 That make a man an offender for a word,
And lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate,

And turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

- 22 Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham,
Concerning the house of Jacob : —
Jacob shall no more be ashamed, neither shall his face any more
wax pale.
- 23 But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the
midst of him,
They shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob,
And shall fear the God of Israel.
- 24 They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
And the murmurers shall learn doctrine.

XXX

- Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD,
That take counsel, but not of me ;
And that weave a web, but not of my spirit,
That they may add sin to sin :
- 2 That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my
mouth ;
To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh,
And to trust in the shadow of Egypt !
- 3 Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame,
And the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.
- 4 For his princes are at Zoan, and his ambassadors come to Hanes.
- 5 They are all ashamed of a people that can not profit them,
Nor be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach.
- 6 O the burden of the beasts travelling southwards !
Through a land of trouble and anguish,
From whence come the lioness and the fierce lion,
The viper and fiery flying serpent :
They carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses,
And their treasures upon the bunches of camels,
To a people that shall not profit them.
- 7 For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose :
Therefore have I called her the blusterer that sitteth still.
- 8 Now go, write it before them on a table, and note it in a book,
That it may be for the time to come for ever and ever :
- 9 For this is a rebellious people, lying children,
Children that will not hear the law of the LORD :
- 10 Which say to the seers, Ye shall not see ;
And to the prophets, Ye shall not not prophesy unto us right
things ;
Speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits :
- 11 Get out of the way, turn aside out of the path,
Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.
- 12 Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel,
Because ye despise this word,
And trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon :
- 13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall,
Swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at
an instant.

- 14 And it shall be broken as when an earthen pitcher is broken in pieces, —broken unsparingly,
So that there is not to be found, among its fragments,
A sherd to take fire from the hearth,
Or to take water withal out of the well.
- 15 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel;
In returning and rest shall ye be saved;
In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength:
And ye would not.
- 16 But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses;
Therefore shall ye flee:
And, We will ride upon the swift;
Therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.
- 17 One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one;
At the rebuke of five shall ye flee:
Till ye be left as a flag-staff upon the top of a mountain,
And as a signal on an hill.
- 18 And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you,
And therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you:
For the LORD is a God of righteousness:
Blessed are all they that wait for him.
- 19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem:
Thou shalt weep no more:
He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry;
When he shall hear it, he will answer thee.
- 20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction,
Yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more,
But thine eyes shall see thy teachers:
- 21 And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying,
This is the way, walk ye in it,
When ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.
- 22 Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver,
And the ornament of thy molten images of gold:
Thou shalt cast them away as a loathsome thing;
Thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.
- 23 Then shall he give rain for thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal;
And bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous:
In that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.
- 24 The oxen and the young asses that till the ground shall eat well-seasoned provender,
Which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.
- 25 And there shall be upon every lofty mountain, and upon every high hill,
Rivers, and streams of waters,

- In the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.
 26 And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun,
 And the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven
 days,
 In the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people,
 And healeth the stroke of their wound.
- 27 Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far,
 His anger burning, and its flame going up heavily :
 His lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring
 fire :
 28 And his breath as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst
 of the neck.
 He will sift the nations with the sieve of perdition :
 And will put a bridle in the jaws of the peoples, to lead them
 astray.
- 29 Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept ;
 And gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe
 To come into the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel.
- 30 And the LORD shall cause the majesty of his voice to be heard,
 And shall show the lighting down of his arm,
 With the indignation of anger and a flame of devouring fire,
 With scattering, and tempest, and stones of hail.
- 31 For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten
 down.
 He shall smite him with a rod.
- 32 And every stroke of the staff of doom, which the LORD shall lay
 upon him,
 Shall be with tabrets and harps : and with fierce battles will he
 fight against them.
- 33 For Tophet is ordained of old ; yea, for the king it is prepared ;
 He hath made it deep and large : the pile thereof is fire and much
 wood ;
 The breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

- XXXI Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help ; and stay
 on horses,
 And trust in chariots, because they are many ;
 And in horsemen, because they are very strong ;
 But that look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the
 LORD !
- 2 Yet He also is wise, and bringeth evil, and doth not call back his
 words :
 And he riseth up against the house of the evildoers,
 And against the help of them that work iniquity.
- 3 And the Egyptians are men, and not God ;
 And their horses flesh, and not spirit.
 And the LORD shall stretch out his hand,
 And he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall
 down,
 And they all shall perish together.

- 4 For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me,
Like as the lion and the young lion growling over his prey,
When a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him,
He is not afraid of their voice, nor abaseth himself for the noise
of them :
So shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion,
and for the hill thereof.
- 5 As the mother birds hovering over their young,
So will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem ;
Defend and deliver, pass over and save.
- 6 Return ye unto Him from whom ye have so deeply revolted,
O sons of Israel.
- 7 For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and
his idols of gold,
Which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.
- 8 Then shall the Assyrian fall by the sword, not of a man ;
And the sword, not of a mortal, shall devour him :
And he shall flee from the sword, and his young warriors shall be
bondsmen.
- 9 And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear,
And his princes shall be afraid of every standard,
Saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

XXXII

- Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness,
And princes shall rule in judgment.
- 2 And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind,
And a covert from the storm ;
As rivers of water in a dry place,
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
- 3 And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim,
And the ears of them that hear shall hearken.
- 4 And the heart of the reckless shall understand knowledge,
And the tongue of the stammerer shall be ready to speak plainly.
- 5 The vile person shall be no more called honourable,
Nor the churl said to be bountiful.
- 6 For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work
iniquity,
To practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD,
To make empty the soul of the hungry,
And he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.
- 7 The instruments also of the churl are evil : he deviseth wicked
devices
To destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy
speaketh right.
- 8 But the liberal deviseth liberal things ; and on liberal things doth
he take his stand.
- 9 Rise up, ye women that are at ease ;
Hear my voice, ye careless daughters ; give ear unto my speech.
- 10 In a year and day shall ye be troubled, ye careless women :
For the vintage faileth, the gathering shall not come.

- 11 Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones;
Strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins;
- 12 Beating on the breasts, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.
- 13 Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers;
Yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city.
- 14 For the palace is forsaken; the crowd of the city left;
Hill, fort, and tower are dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;
- 15 Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high,
And the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be reckoned to the forest.
- 16 And judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field;
- 17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace;
And the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.
- 18 And my people shall dwell in a home of peace,
And in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;
- 19 And it shall hail, to the downfall of the forest;
And the city shall be low in a low place.
- 20 Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters,
That send forth the feet of the ox and the ass.

- XXXIII Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled;
And dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee!
When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled;
When thou hast done dealing treacherously,
They shall deal treacherously with thee.
- 2 O LORD, be gracious unto us; we wait for thee:
Be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.
- 3 At the voice of thy mouth the peoples flee;
At thy rising up the nations are scattered.
- 4 And your spoil shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar:
As the running to and fro of locusts shall they run upon it.
- 5 The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high:
He hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.
- 6 And He shall be the stability of thy times,
Thy strength of salvation, wisdom and knowledge:
The fear of the LORD is his treasure.
- 7 Behold, their valiant ones cry without:
The ambassadors of peace weep bitterly.
- 8 The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth:
He hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man.
- 9 The earth mourneth and languisheth:
Lebanon is ashamed and withereth away:

Sharon is like a wilderness ; and Bashan and Carmel cast their leaves.

- 10 Now will I rise, shall the LORD say ;
 Now will I be exalted ; now will I lift up myself.
- 11 Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble :
 Your breath, as fire, shall devour you.
- 12 And the people shall be as the burnings of lime :
 As thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.
- 13 Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done ;
 And, ye that are near, acknowledge my might.
- 14 The sinners in Zion are afraid ; fearfulness had surprised the hypocrites.
 Who among us can abide the devouring fire ?
 Who among us can abide perpetual burnings ?
- 15 He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly ;
 He that despiseth the gain of oppressions,
 That shaketh his hands from holding of bribes,
 That stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood,
 And shutteth his eyes from looking at evil ;
- 16 He shall dwell in high places :
 His place of defence shall be the strongholds of rocks :
 Bread shall be given him ; his waters shall be sure.
- 17 Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty :
 They shall behold the distant country.
- 18 Thine heart shall meditate on the past terror.
 Where is he that counted ? where is he that weighed ?
 Where is the receiver ? where is he that counted the towers ?
- 19 Thou shalt not see a fierce people,
 A people of deep speech that thou canst not hear ;
 Of a barbarous tongue, that thou canst not understand.
- 20 Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities :
 Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet home,
 A tent that shall not be taken down ;
 Not one of its stakes shall ever be pulled up,
 Neither shall any of its cords be broken.
- 21 But there shall the LORD be mighty for us, a place of broad rivers
 and streams ;
 Wherein shall go no oared galley, neither shall gallant ship pass
 thereby.
- 22 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver,
 The LORD is our king ; he will save us.
- 23 Thy tacklings are loosed ;
 They cannot hold the mast upright, they cannot spread the sail :
 Then is the booty of a great spoil divided ; the lame take the
 prey.
- 24 And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick :
 The people that dwell therein are forgiven their iniquity.

XXXIV

Come near, ye nations, to hear ; and hearken, ye peoples :
 Let the earth hear, and all that is therein ;

- The world, and all things that come forth of it.
- 2 For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his wrath upon all their armies:
He hath utterly doomed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.
- 3 And their slain shall be cast out,
And the stench of their carcases shall go up,
And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.
- 4 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved,
And the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll:
And all their host shall fall down,
As the withered leaf falleth off from the vine,
And as the blighted fruit from the fig tree.
- 5 For my sword is bathed in heaven:
Behold, it shall come down upon Edom,
And upon the people of my doom, for judgment.
- 6 The sword of the LORD is glutted with blood, it is gorged with fat,
With the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams:
For the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
- 7 And the buffaloes fall down with them,
And the bullocks with the bulls;
And their land shall be drunken with blood, and their dust made rich with fat.
- 8 For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance,
And the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.
- 9 And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch,
And the dust thereof into brimstone,
And the land thereof shall become burning pitch.
- 10 It shall not be quenched night nor day;
The smoke thereof shall go up for ever:
From generation to generation it shall lie waste;
None shall pass through it for ever and ever.
- 11 And it shall be an heritage for the pelican and the porcupine;
The bittern also and the raven shall dwell in it:
And He shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the plummet of emptiness.
- 12 They shall call her nobles to the kingdom,
But none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing.
- 13 And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in her fortresses;
And she shall be the home of wolves, and a court for the daughters of the ostrich;
- 14 And the wild beasts shall meet with the howling beast,
And the he-goat shall cry to his fellow;
The screech owl also shall pitch there, and find for herself a place of rest.
- 15 There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow:

There shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

- 16 Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read :
No one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate :
For my mouth it hath commanded, and His spirit it hath gathered them.
- 17 And He hath cast the lot for them, and His hand hath divided it unto them by line :
They shall possess it as an heritage for ever,
From generation to generation shall they dwell therein.

XXXV The wilderness and the parched land shall be glad for them ;

- And the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.
- 2 It shall blossom, it shall blossom and rejoice,
Yea, with joy and singing :
The glory of Lebanon is given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon ;
They shall see the glory of the LORD, the excellency of our God.
- 3 Strengthen ye the hands now dropping,
And confirm the knees now tottering :
- 4 Say to the faint heart, Be strong, fear not :
Behold, your God ! Vengeance cometh : the recompence of God :
He will come and save you.
- 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
- 6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall shout :
For in the wilderness have waters broken out, and streams in the desert.
- 7 And the mirage shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground bubbling springs,
In the habitation of wolves, in their lair, in the place of reeds and rushes.
- 8 And an highway shall be there, and a way,
And it shall be called The way of holiness ;
The unclean shall not pass over it ; but it shall be for those :
The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.
- 9 No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beasts go up thereon ;
It shall not be found there ; but the redeemed shall walk there :
- 10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
And come to Zion with shouts, and everlasting joy upon their heads :
Joy and gladness shall overtake them, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

XXXVI Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and took them. And the king of

Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem, unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the aqueduct of the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field. Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house, And Shebna the secretary, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder.

And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? I say, words, mere words, are thy counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt: whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him. But if thou say to me, We trust in the LORD our God: is it not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar? Now therefore, I pray thee, engage with my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in Syrian; for we understand it: and speak not to us in Jewish, in the ears of the people that are on the wall. But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall, only to die with you by famine and thirst?

Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in Jewish, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Harken not to Hezekiah; for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make peace with me, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

And they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

22 Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

XXXVII

And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.

5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he had broken up from Lachish. And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee. And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah, king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?

14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries, and have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore

20 they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD our God,
save us from his hand, That all the kingdoms of the earth may
know that thou art the LORD, even thou only.

21 And Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus
saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me
22 against Sennacherib king of Assyria; this is the word which the
LORD hath spoken concerning him;

The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee,
And laughed thee to scorn;
The daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.
23 Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed?
And against whom hast thou exalted thy voice,
And lifted up thine eyes on high?
Even against the Holy One of Israel.
24 By thy servants hast thou reproached the LORD, and hast said,
By the multitude of my chariots am I come up
To the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon:
And I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir
trees thereof:
And I will enter into his farthest height, and into his garden-
forest.

25 I have digged, and drunk water;
And with the sole of my feet will I dry up all the rivers of
Egypt.

26 Hast thou not heard? From afar have I done it;
From the days of old have I prepared it.
Now have I brought it to pass, and it is:—
Defenced cities are laid waste into ruinous heaps:
27 And their inhabitants are of small power,
They are dismayed and confounded:
They are grass of the field, and green herbage,
Grass on the housetops, and corn blasted before it be grown up.
28 But I know thy abode, and thy going out,
And thy coming in, and thy rage against me.
29 Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine
ears,

Therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips,
And I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

30 And this shall be the sign unto thee;
Eat this year what groweth of itself;
And the second year that which springeth of the same:
And in the third year sow ye, and reap,
And plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.
31 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah
Shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward:
32 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant,
And they that escape out of mount Zion:
The zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.

33 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of
Assyria,

- He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it with shields, nor cast up a mound against it.
- 34 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return,
And shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.
- 35 For I will defend this city to save it,
For my own sake and for my servant David's sake.
- 36 And the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp
of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand : and
37 when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead
corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria decamped, and departed,
38 and returned, and remained in Nineveh. And it came to pass, as
he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adram-
39 melech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword ; and
they escaped into the land of Armenia ; and Esar-haddon his
son reigned in his stead.

- XXXVIII IN those days was Hezekiah sick, at the point of death.
And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and
said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order :
2 for thou art dying, and shalt not live. Then Hezekiah turned his
3 face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, and said, Re-
member now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before
thee in truth and with a whole heart, and have done that which
is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.
- 4 And the word of the LORD came to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say
5 to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father,
I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears : behold, I will add
6 unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city
out of the hand of the king of Assyria : and I will defend this
7 city. And this is the sign unto thee from the LORD, that the
LORD will perform this word that he hath spoken ; Behold, I am
causing the shadow to go back the degrees which it has gone
8 down on the sun-dial of Ahaz ten degrees backward. And the sun
returned ten degrees, by which degrees it had gone down.
- 9 THE WRITING OF HEZEKIAH KING OF JUDAH, WHEN HE HAD
BEEN SICK, AND WAS RECOVERED OF HIS SICKNESS.
- 10 I said, I shall go to the gates of the grave in the midst of my days :
I am deprived of the residue of my years.
- 11 I said, I shall not see the LORD, the LORD in the land of the living :
I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.
- 12 My generation is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's
tent :
I have cut off like a weaver my life :
He will cut me off from the loom :
From day to night wilt thou make an end of me.
- 13 I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my
bones :
From day to night wilt thou make an end of me.

- 14 Like a crane or a swallow, so I cry : I do mourn as a dove :
Mine eyes fail with looking upward :
O LORD, I am oppressed : undertake for me.
- 15 What shall I say ?
He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it :
I shall go softly all my years, for the bitterness of my soul.
- 16 O Lord, by these things men live,
And in all these things is the life of my spirit :
So wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.
- 17 Behold, my great bitterness is turned to peace.
And thou hast loved my soul from the pit of corruption :
For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.
- 18 For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee :
They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.
- 19 The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day :
The father to the children shall make known thy truth.
- 20 The LORD to save me !
And we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments
All the days of our life, in the house of the LORD.
- 21 For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it
22 for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover. Hezekiah also
had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the
LORD ?
-

- XXXIX At that time Merodach-Baladan, the son of Baladan, King of
Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah : for he had heard
- 2 that he had been sick, and was recovered. And Hezekiah was
glad of them, and showed them his house of precious things, the
silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment,
and all the house of his arms, and all that was found in his
treasures : there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion,
that Hezekiah showed them not.
- 3 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said
unto him, What said these men ? and from whence came they
unto thee ? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far
- 4 country unto me, from Babylon. Then said he, What have they
seen in thine house ? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in
mine house have they seen : there is nothing among my treasures
that I have not showed them.
- 5 And Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of
6 hosts : Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house,
and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day,
shall be carried to Babylon : nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.
- 7 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget,
shall they take away ; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace
of the king of Babylon.
- 8 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD
which thou hast spoken. And he said, For there shall be peace
and truth in my days.
-

- XL COMFORT ye, comfort ye my people, shall your God say.
 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her,
 That her warfare is accomplished,
 That her iniquity is pardoned :
 For she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.
- 3 A voice of one crying in the wilderness,
 Prepare ye the way of the LORD,
 Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
- 4 Every valley shall be raised, and every mountain and hill shall
 be made low :
 And the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places
 plain :
- 5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall
 see it together :
 For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.
- 6 A voice saying, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry ?
 All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower
 of the field :
- 7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,
 Because the breath of the LORD bloweth upon it :
 Surely the people is grass.
- 8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth :
 But the word of our God shall stand for ever.
- 9 O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion,
 Get thee up into a high mountain ;
 O thou that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem,
 Lift up thy voice with strength ; lift it up, be not afraid ;
 Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God !
- 10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand,
 And his arm shall rule for him :
 Behold, his reward is with him, and his wages before him.
- 11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd :
 He shall gather the lambs with his arm,
 And carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead the nursing
 ewes.
- 12 Who hath meted out the waters in the hollow of his hand,
 And measured heaven with the span,
 And comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure,
 And weighed the mountains in scales,
 And the hills in a balance ?
- 13 Who hath measured the Spirit of the LORD,
 Or being his counsellor will make Him to know ?
- 14 With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him,
 And taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him know-
 ledge,
 And will make him to know the way of understanding ?
- 15 Behold, the nations are as a drop from a bucket,
 And are counted as dust on the scales :
 Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.
- 16 And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn,

- Nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.
- 17 All nations before him are as nothing ;
And they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.
- 18 To whom then will ye liken God ?
Or what likeness will ye compare unto Him ?
- 19 To the image which a carver hath wrought,
And the goldsmith will spread it over with gold, and casteth
silver chains !
- 20 He that is impoverished by oblations chooseth a tree that will not
rot ;
He seeketh unto him a cunning workman,
To prepare a graven image that shall not be moved !
- 21 Will ye not know ? will ye not hear ?
Hath it not been told you from the beginning ?
Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth ?
- 22 It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth,
And the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers ;
That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,
And spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in :
- 23 That bringeth the princes to nothing ;
He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.
- 24 Yea, they were not planted ; yea, they were not sown :
Yea, their stock hath not taken root in the earth :
And He hath breathed upon them, and they withered,
And the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.
- 25 To whom then will ye liken me,—or shall I be equal ?—
saith the Holy One.
- 26 Lift up your eyes on high, and see :
Who hath created these—bringing out their host by number ?
He calleth them all by name,
By the greatness of his might, for that He is strong in power ;
Not one faileth.
- 27 Why wilt thou say, O Jacob, and why thus speak, O Israel,
My way is hid from the LORD,
And my cause will be passed over by my God ?
- 28 Hast thou not known ? hast thou not heard,
That the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of
the earth,
Will not faint, neither be weary ? there is no searching of his un-
derstanding.
- 29 He giveth power to the faint ; and to them that have no might he
increaseth strength.
- 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall
utterly fall :
- 31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength ;
They shall raise the wing like eagles ;
They shall run, and not be weary, they shall walk, and not faint.
- XLI Keep silence before me, O islands ; and let the people renew
their strength.
Let them come near ; then let them speak :

Let us come near to the judgment seat together.

- 2 Who hath raised up one from the east?
 Righteousness shall call him to its foot,
 Shall give the nations before him, and make him tread upon kings :
 Shall give them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to
 his bow.
- 3 He shall pursue them, he shall pass safely ; he shall not touch the
 ground with his feet.
- 4 Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the
 beginning ?
 I the LORD, the first, and with the last : I am He.
- 5 The isles have seen it, and feared ;
 The ends of the earth tremble, have drawn near, and come.
- 6 They will help every one his neighbour ;
 And every one will say to his brother, Be of good courage.
 And the carpenter has encouraged the goldsmith,
 And he that smootheth with the hammer him that smiteth the
 anvil,
- 7 Saying of the soldering, it is good :
 And he has fastened it with nails ; it shall not be moved.
- 8 But thou, Israel, my servant,
 Jacob whom I have chosen ; the seed of Abraham my friend ;
- 9 Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth,
 And called thee from the sides thereof,
 And said unto thee, Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee, and
 not cast thee away ;
- 10 Fear thou not ; for I am with thee : be not dismayed ; for I am
 thy God :
 I have strengthened thee ; yea, I have helped thee ;
 Yea, I have upheld thee with the right hand of my righteousness.
- 11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed
 and confounded :
 They shall be as nothing ; and they that strive with thee shall
 perish.
- 12 Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that con-
 tended with thee :
 They that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of
 nought.
- 13 For I the LORD thy God do hold thy right hand,
 Saying unto thee, Fear not ; I have helped thee.
- 14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel ;
 I have helped thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy
 One of Israel.
- 15 Behold, I have made of thee a new sharp threshing instrument
 having teeth ;
 Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small,
 And shalt make the hills as chaff.
- 16 Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away,
 And the whirlwind shall scatter them :

And thou shalt rejoice in the LORD,
And shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

- 17 The poor and needy seek water, and there is none,
And their tongue faileth for thirst :
I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.
- 18 I will open rivers on bare hills, and fountains in the midst of the valleys :
I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry lands springs of water.
- 19 I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, and the myrtle, and the oil tree ;
I will set in the desert the fir tree, the pine, and the box tree together :
- 20 That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together,
That the hand of the LORD hath done this,
And the Holy One of Israel hath created it.
- 21 Produce your cause, will the LORD say ;
Bring forth your strong reasons, will the King of Jacob say.
- 22 Let them bring forth, and show us, the things that shall happen :
Let them show the former things, what they were,
That we may consider them, and know the latter end of them :
Or declare us things for to come.
- 23 Show the things that are to come hereafter,
That we may know that ye are gods :
Yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.
- 24 Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought :
An abomination is he that chooseth you.
- 25 I have raised up one from the north, and he hath come :
From the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name :
And he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.
- 26 Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know ?
And beforetime, that we may say, It is right ?
Yea, there is none that sheweth, yea, there is none that declareth,
Yea, there is none that heareth your words.
- 27 I am the first to say to Zion, Behold, behold them :
And to give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.
- 28 For I will look, but there is no one,
Even among these idols, but there is no counsellor,
That, when I ask of them can answer a word.
- 29 Behold, they are all vanity ; their works are nothing :
Their molten images are wind and emptiness.

XLII Behold my servant, I will uphold him ;
Mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth ;
I have put my spirit upon him : he shall bring forth judgment to the nations.

- 2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

- 3 A bruised reed shall he not break,
And the dimly burning flax shall he not quench :
He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.
- 4 He shall not be dim, nor bruised,
Till he have set judgment in the earth :
And the isles shall wait for his law.
- 5 Thus saith God the LORD,
He that createth the heavens, and stretcheth them out ;
He that spreadeth forth the earth, and that which cometh out of
it ;
He that giveth breath unto the people upon it,
And spirit to them that walk therein :
- 6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine
hand,
And will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people,
For a light of the Gentiles ;
- 7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoner from the prison,
And them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.
- 8 I am the LORD : that is my name :
And my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to
graven images.
- 9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I
declare :
Before they spring forth I will tell you of them.
- 10 Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end
of the earth,
Ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein ;
The isles, and the inhabitants thereof.
- 11 The wilderness and the cities thereof shall lift up their voice,
The villages that Kedar doth inhabit :
The inhabitants of the Rock shall sing,
They shall shout from the top of the mountain.
- 12 They shall give glory unto the LORD, and shall declare his praise
in the islands.
- 13 The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man,
He shall stir up his zeal like a man of war :
He shall shout, yea, roar ; he shall behave himself mightily against
his enemies.
- 14 I have long time holden my peace ; I have been still, and re-
frained myself :
Now will I cry like a travailing woman ; I will destroy and devour
at once.
- 15 I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herb-
age ;
And I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools.
- 16 And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not ;
I will lead them in paths that they have not known :
I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.
These are my words : I do them, and forsake them not.
- 17 They are turned back, they shall be utterly ashamed,

- That trust in graven images,
 That say to the molten images, Ye are our gods.
- 18 Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.
 19 Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger, whom I
 will send?
 Who is blind as he that is consecrated, and blind as the LORD's
 servant?
- 20 Thou hast seen many things, but not observed;
 Thou openest the ears, but wilt not hear.
- 21 The LORD is well pleased, for his righteousness sake,
 To magnify the law, and make it honourable.
- 22 But this is a people robbed and spoiled;
 They are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison
 houses:
 They are for a prey, and none delivereth;
 For a spoil, and none saith, Restore.
- 23 Who among you will give ear to this?
 Who will hearken and hear for the time to come?
- 24 Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers?
 Did not the LORD, against whom we have sinned?
 For they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient
 unto his law.
- 25 Therefore He hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the
 strength of battle:
 And it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not;
 And it burned him, yet he will not lay it to heart.

- XLIII But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob,
 And he that formed thee, O Israel,
 Fear not: for I have redeemed thee;
 I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.
- 2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee;
 And through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee:
 When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned;
 Neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.
- 3 For I the LORD thy God, the Holy one of Israel, thy Saviour,
 Have given Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.
- 4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable,
 And I have loved thee:
 And I will give men for thee, and nations for thy life.
- 5 Fear not: for I am with thee:
 I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the
 west;
- 6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not
 back:
 Bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the
 earth;
- 7 Even every one that is called by my name:
 For I have created him for my glory:
 I have formed him, yea, I have made him.

- 8 He hath brought forth the blind people, and they have eyes,
And the deaf, and they have ears.
- 9 Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the peoples be
assembled :
Who among them can declare this, and show us former things ?
Let them produce their witnesses, that they may be justified :
Or let them hear me, and say, It is the truth.
- 10 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I
have chosen :
That ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he :
Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after
me.
- 11 I, even I, am the LORD ; and beside me there is no saviour.
- 12 I have declared, and have saved, and have showed,
And there is no strange god among you :
Therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.
- 13 Yea, before the day was I am he ;
And there is none that can deliver out of my hand :
I will work, and who shall let it ?
- 14 Thus saith the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of
Israel ;
For your sake I have sent to Babylon,
And have brought down all their nobles,
And the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.
- 15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.
- 16 Thus saith the LORD,
Which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters ;
- 11 Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the
power ;
They shall lie down together, they shall not rise :
They are extinct, they are quenched as tow.
- 18 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of
old.
- 19 Behold, I do a new thing ; now it shall spring forth ;
Shall ye not know it ?
I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.
- 20 The beast of the field shall honour me, the wolves and the
ostriches.
Because I have given waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the
desert,
To give drink to my people, my chosen.
- 21 This people have I formed for myself ; they shall show forth my
praise.
- 22 But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob ;
But thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.
- 23 Thou hast not brought me the sheep of thy burnt offerings ;
Neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices.
I have not caused thee to serve with an oblation,
Nor wearied thee with incense.
- 24 Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money,

- Neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices :
 But thou hast made me to serve with thy sins,
 Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.
- 25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake,
 And will not remember thy sins.
- 26 Put me in remembrance : let us plead together :
 State thy case, that thou mayest be justified.
- 27 Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me.
- 28 And I will profane the holy princes,
 And will give Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

XLIV Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant ; and Israel, whom I have chosen :

- 2 Thus saith the LORD thy maker ; and he that formed thee from the womb will help thee :
 Fear not, O Jacob, my servant ; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.
- 3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground :
 I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring :
- 4 And they shall spring up among the grass, as willows by the water courses.
- 5 This one shall say, I am the LORD'S ; and this one shall call himself by the name of Jacob ;
 And this shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD,
 And surname himself by the name of Israel.
- 6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel,
 And his Redeemer the LORD of hosts ;
 I am the first, and I am the last ; and beside me there is no God.
- 7 And who, as I, will call, and declare it, and state it to me,
 Since I founded the ancient people ?
 And the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them.
- 8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid :
 Have not I told thee from that time, and declared it ?
 And ye are my witnesses.
 Is there a God beside me ? yea, there is no Rock ; I know not any.
- 9 They that make a graven image are all of them vanity ;
 And their delectable things shall not profit ;
 And they are their own witnesses ;
- 10 They see not, nor know ; that they may be ashamed.
 Who hath formed a god, or molten image that is profitable for nothing ?
- 11 Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed :
 And the workmen, themselves are but men :
 Let them all be gathered together, let them stand up ;
 Yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.

- 12 The smith both maketh an axe, and worketh it in the coals,
And he will fashion it with hammers, and work it with the strength
of his arms :
Yea, he is hungry, and is strength faileth : he drinketh no water,
and is faint.
- 13 The carpenter hath stretched out his rule ; he will mark it
out with an awl ;
He will form it with chisels, and he will mark it out with the
compass,
And he hath made it after the figure of a man,
According to the beauty of the human form,
To dwell in a house.
- 14 He heweth him down cedars, and taketh a cypress and an oak,
Which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest :
He planteth an ash, and the rain will nourish it :
- 15 Then shall it be for a man to burn : for he will take thereof, and
warm himself ;
Yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread ;
Yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it ;
He maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.
- 16 He burneth half thereof in the fire ;
With half thereof he heateth flesh ; he roasteth roast, and is satis-
fied :
Yea he will warm himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen
the fire :
- 17 And the residue thereof he hath made a god, even his graven
image :
He will fall down unto it, and will worship it,
And will pray unto it, and say, Deliver me ; for thou art my god.
- 18 They have not known, and they will not understand :
For he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see ;
And their hearts, that they cannot do wisely.
- 19 And none considereth in his heart,
Neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say,
I have burned half of it in the fire ;
Yea, and I have baked bread upon the coals thereof ;
I have roasted flesh, and eaten it :
And I will make the residue thereof an abomination,
I will fall down to the stock of a tree.
- 20 He feedeth on ashes : a deceived heart hath turned him aside,
That he cannot deliver his soul, nor say,
Is there not a lie in my right hand ?
- 21 Remember these things, O Jacob and Israel ;
For thou art my servant : I have formed thee ; thou art my ser-
vant :
O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.
- 22 I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions,
And, as a cloud, thy sins :
Return unto me ; for I have redeemed thee.
- 23 Sing, O ye heavens ; for the LORD hath done it : shout, ye
lower parts of the earth :

Break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein :

For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and will glorify himself in Israel.

24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb,

I am the LORD that maketh all things ;

That stretcheth forth the heavens alone ; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself ;

25 That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and will make diviners mad ;

That turneth wise men backward, and will make their knowledge foolish ;

26 That confirmeth the word of his servant, and will perform the counsel of his messengers ;

That saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited ;

And to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built,

And I will raise up the ruins thereof :

27 That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers :

28 That saith to Coresh, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure :

Even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built ;

And to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

XLV Thus saith the LORD to his anointed,

To Coresh, whose right hand I have holden,

To subdue nations before him ; and I will loose the loins of kings ;

To open before him the two leaved gates ; and the gates shall not be shut ;

2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight :

I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron :

3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places,

That thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name,

Am the God of Israel.

4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect,

Therefore, I will call thee by thy name :

I will surname thee, though thou hast not known me.

5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me :

I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me :

6 That they may know, from the rising of the sun to his going down, that there is none beside me.

I am the LORD, and there is none else.

7 I form the light, and create darkness : I make peace, and create evil :

I the LORD do all these things.

8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness :

Let the earth open, and let salvation and righteousness spring up,
Let her bring them forth together :
I the LORD have created it.

- 9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker !
A potsherd of the potsherds of the earth !
Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou ?
Or thy work, He hath no hands ?
- 10 Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What wilt thou beget ?
Or to the woman, What wilt thou bring forth ?
- 11 Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker,
Ask me of things to come concerning my sons,
And concerning the work of my hands command ye me.
- 12 I have made the earth, and created man upon it :
I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens,
And all their hosts have I commanded.
- 13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his
ways :
He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for
price nor reward,
Saith the LORD of hosts.
- 14 Thus saith the LORD,
The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia,
And of the Sabeans, men of stature,
Shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine :
They shall come after thee ; in chains they shall come over.
And they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication
unto thee,
Saying, Surely God is in thee ; and there is none else, there is no
God.
- 15 Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel,
the Saviour.
- 16 They are ashamed, and also confounded, all of them :
They are gone into confusion together—makers of idols.
- 17 But Israel is saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation :
Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.
- 18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens ;
God himself that formed the earth and made it ;
He hath established it,
He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited :
I am the LORD ; and there is none else.
- 19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth :
I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain.
I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.
- 20 Assemble yourselves and come ;
Draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations :
They have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven
image,
And pray unto a god that cannot save.
- 21 Tell ye, and bring them near : yea, let them take counsel together :
Who hath declared this from ancient time ? who hath told it since
then ?

- Have not I the LORD ? and there is no God else beside me ;
 A just God and a Saviour ; there is none beside me.
- 22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth :
 For I am God, and there is none else.
- 23 I have sworn by myself,
 The word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not
 return,
 That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.
- 24 Only in the LORD have I righteousness and strength, shall he say :
 Unto him shall he come ; and all that are incensed against him
 shall be ashamed.
- 25 In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall
 glory.

XLVI

- Bel is bowed down, Nebo stooping,
 Their images are laid upon the beasts, and upon the cattle :
 These, which you carried in processions,
 Are packed up, a burden to the weary beast.
- 2 They stoop, they bow down together ; they cannot deliver the
 burden,
 But themselves are gone into captivity.
- 3 Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the
 house of Israel,
 Which are borne by me from the womb, which are carried from
 the birth :
- 4 And to your old age I am he ; and to hoar hairs will I carry you :
 I have made, and I will bear ; and I will carry, and will deliver
 you.
- 5 To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal,
 And compare me, that we may be like ?
- 6 They will lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the
 balance.
 They will hire a goldsmith ; and he will make it a god :
 They will fall down, yea, they will worship.
- 7 They will bear him upon the shoulder, they will carry him,
 And set him in his place, and he will stand ;
 From his place will he not remove :
 Yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer,
 Nor save him out of his trouble.
- 8 Remember this, and show yourselves men :
 Bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.
- 9 Remember the former things of old :
 For I am God, and there is none else ;
 I am God, and there is none like me,
- 10 Declaring the end from the beginning,
 And from ancient times the things that are not yet done,
 Saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure .
- 11 Calling an eagle from the east,
 The man of my counsel from a far country :
 Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass ;
 I have purposed it, I will also do it.

- 12 Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness :
 13 I bring near my righteousness ; it shall not be far off,
 And my salvation shall not tarry :
 And I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

XLVII Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon,
 sit on the ground :

There is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans :
 For thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

- 2 Take the millstones, and grind meal :
 3 Uncover thy locks, lift up thy skirt, make bare the leg, pass over
 the rivers.
 2 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen :
 I will take vengeance, and no man shall resist me.
 4 As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy
 One of Israel.
 5 Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the
 Chaldeans :
 For thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.
 6 I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance,
 And given them into thine hand : thou didst show them no mercy ;
 Upon the aged hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.
 7 And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever :
 So that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart,
 Neither didst remember the latter end of it.
 8 Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that
 dwellest carelessly,
 That sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me ;
 I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children :
 9 But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day,
 The loss of children, and widowhood :
 They have come upon thee in their perfection,
 For the multitude of thy sorceries,
 And for the great abundance of thine enchantments.
 10 For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness : thou hast said, None
 seeth me.
 Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath seduced thee ;
 And thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me.
 11 Therefore hath evil come upon thee ; thou shalt not know from
 whence it riseth :
 And mischief shall fall upon thee ; thou shalt not be able to put
 it off :
 And a crash shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not
 know.
 12 Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitudes of
 thy sorceries,
 Wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth ;
 Perhaps thou shalt be able to profit, perhaps thou mayest prevail.
 13 Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels.
 Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognos-
 ticators,

Stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.

- 14 Behold, they are as stubble ; the fire has burned them ;
They cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame :
This is no coal to bake bread with, no fire to sit before.
- 15 Thus are they unto thee with whom thou hast laboured ;
They who have dealt with thee from thy youth,
They shall wander every one to his quarter ; none shall save thee.

XLVIII Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel,

- And are come forth out of the waters of Judah,
Which swear by the name of the LORD,
And make mention of God of Israel,
But not in truth, nor in righteousness.
- 2 For they call themselves of the holy city,
And stay themselves upon the God of Israel ;
The LORD of hosts is his name.
 - 3 I have declared the former things from the beginning ;
And they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them ;
I did them suddenly, and they came to pass.
 - 4 Because I knew that thou art obstinate,
And thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass ;
 - 5 Therefore I have declared it to thee from the beginning ;
Before it come to pass I have showed it thee :
Lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them,
And my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.
 - 6 Thou hast heard, see all this ; will not ye too declare something ?
I have showed thee new things from this time,
Even hidden things, which thou didst not know.
 - 7 They are created now, and not from the beginning ;
And before to-day thou heardest them not ;
Lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them.
 - 8 Yea, thou heardest not ; yea, thou knewest not ;
Yea, of old, thine ear was not opened :
For I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously,
And wast called a rebel from the womb.
 - 9 For my name's sake will I defer mine anger,
And for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.
 - 10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver ;
I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.
 - 11 For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it :
For how should my name be polluted ?
And I will not give my glory unto another.
 - 12 Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel, my called ;
I am he ; I am the first, I also am the last.
 - 13 Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth,
And my right hand hath spanned the heavens :
I call unto them, and they stand up together.
 - 14 All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear ;

Which among them hath declared these things?
 The LORD hath loved him : He will do his pleasure on Babylon,
 And His arm shall be on the Chaldeans.

- 15 I, even I, have spoken ; yea, I have called him :
 I have brought him, and he hath prospered in his way.
- 16 Come ye near unto me, hear ye this ;
 I have not spoken in secret from the beginning ;
 From the time that it was, there am I :
 And now the LORD GOD hath sent me, and his spirit.
- 17 Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel ;
 I am the LORD thy God, which teacheth thee to profit,
 Which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.
- 18 O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments !
 Then had thy peace been as a river,
 And thy righteousness as the waves of the sea ;
- 19 Thy seed also had been as the sand,
 And the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof :—
 Yet his name shall not be cut off, nor destroyed from before me.
- 20 Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans,
 With a voice of shouting declare ye, tell this,
 Utter it even to the end of the earth ;
 Say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.
- 21 And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts :
 He caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them :
 He clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.
- 22 There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.

XLIX

- Listen, O isles, unto me ; and hearken, ye nations, from far ;
 The LORD hath called me from the womb ;
 From the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.
- 2 And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword ;
 In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me,
 And made me a polished shaft ; in his quiver hath he hid me ;
- 3 And he will say unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel,
 In whom I will be glorified.
- 4 And I said, I have laboured in vain,
 I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain :
 Yet surely my right is with the LORD,
 And my work with my God.
- 5 And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be
 his servant,
 To bring Jacob again to him,
 Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes
 of the LORD,
 And my God shall be my strength.
- 6 And He will say, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my
 servant
 To raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of
 Israel :

- I have also given thee for a light to the Gentiles,
That thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.
- 7 Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One ;
To him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth,
to a servant of rulers,
Kings shall see and arise, and princes shall bow themselves,
Because of the LORD that is faithful,
The Holy One of Israel, who shall choose thee.
- 8 Thus saith the LORD,
In a time of favour have I heard thee,
And in a day of salvation have I helped thee :
And I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the
people,
To establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages ;
- 9 To say to the prisoners, Go forth ;
To them that are in darkness, Show yourselves.
They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be on all bare
hills.
- 10 They shall not hunger nor thirst ; neither shall the mirage nor sun
smite them :
For he that hath mercy on them shall lead them,
Even by the springs of water shall he guide them.
- 11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall
be raised.
- 12 Behold, these shall come from far :
And, lo, these from the north and from the west ;
And these from the land of Sinim.
- 13 Shout, O heavens ; and be joyful, O earth ;
Let the mountains break into a shout :
For the LORD hath comforted his people,
And will have mercy upon his afflicted.
- 14 But Zion will say, The LORD hath forsaken me,
And my Lord hath forgotten me.
- 15 Can a woman forget her sucking child,
That she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ?
Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.
- 16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands ;
Thy walls are continually before me.
- 17 Thy children have made haste ;
Thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of
thee.
- 18 Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold :
All of them are gathered together, they are come to thee.
As I live, saith the LORD,
Thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament,
And bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.
- 19 For thy wastes, and thy ruins, and thy desolate land,
Shall even now be too narrow for the inhabitants,
And they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.
- 20 The children of thee, the bereaved one,

Shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me :
Make room for me that I may dwell.

- 21 Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath borne me these,
For I was bereaved and barren ;
A captive, and an exile, and who hath brought up these ?
Behold, I was left alone ; these, where were they ?

- 22 Thus saith the Lord God,
Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations,
And set up my standard to the peoples :
And they shall bring thy sons in their arms,
And thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.
23 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers,
And their queens thy nursing mothers :
They shall bow down to thee with their face to the earth,
And lick the dust of thy feet ;
And thou shalt know that I am the LORD,
Whom they that wait for shall not be ashamed.

- 24 Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive
delivered ?

- 25 But thus saith the LORD,
Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away,
And the prey of the terrible shall be delivered :
For I will contend with him that contendeth with thee,
And I will save thy children.
26 And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh ;
And they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with new
wine :
And all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour,
And thy Redeemer is the Mighty One of Jacob.

- L Thus saith the LORD,
Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have
put away ?
Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you ?
Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves,
And for your transgressions is your mother put away.

- 2 Wherefore, when I came, was there no man ?
When I called, was there none to answer ?
Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem ?
And have I no power to deliver ?
Behold, by my rebuke I will dry up the sea,
I will make the rivers a wilderness ;
Their fish shall rot, because there is no water, and die for thirst ;
3 I will clothe the heavens with blackness,
And I will make sackcloth their covering.

- 4 The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the scholar,
That I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is
weary :

He will waken me morning by morning,
He will waken mine ear to hear as the scholar.

- 5 The Lord God hath opened mine ear,

- And I did not resist, neither turned away back.
 6 I gave my back to the smiters,
 And my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair :
 I hid not my face from shame and spitting.
 7 For the Lord GOD will help me ; therefore I am not confounded :
 Therefore have I set my face like a flint,
 And I know that I shall not be ashamed.
 8 My justifier is near ;
 Who will contend with me ? let us stand up together :
 Who is mine adversary ? let him come near to me.
 9 Behold, the Lord GOD will help me ; who is he that shall condemn
 me ?
 Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment ; the moth shall eat them up.
- 10 Who is among you that feareth the LORD,
 That obeyeth the voice of his servant,
 That walketh in darkness, and hath no light ?
 Let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.
 11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about
 with sparks :
 Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have
 kindled.
 This shall ye have of mine hand ; ye shall lie down in sorrow.
- LI Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness,
 Ye that seek the LORD :
 Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn,
 And to the hole of the quarry whence ye are digged.
 2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you :
 For I called him alone, and I will bless him, and cause him to in-
 crease.
 3 For the LORD hath comforted Zion : he hath comforted all her
 waste places ;
 And he hath made her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like
 the garden of the LORD ;
 Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the
 voice of melody.
- 4 Hearken unto me, my people ;
 And give ear unto me, O my nation :
 For a law shall go forth from me,
 And I will establish my judgment for a light of the nations.
 5 My righteous is near ; my salvation is gone forth ;
 And mine arms shall judge the nations :
 The isles shall wait upon me, and in mine arm shall they trust.
 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth
 beneath :
 For the heavens are driven away like smoke, and the earth shall
 wax old like a garment,
 And they that dwell therein shall die in like manner :
 But my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not
 be abolished.

- 7 Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness,
 The people in whose heart is my law ;
 Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their
 revilings.
- 8 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm
 shall eat them like wool :
 But my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from
 generation to generation.
- 9 Awake ! awake ! put on strength, O arm of the LORD ;
 Awake ! as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.
 Art thou not the same that hewed Rahab in pieces, that wounded
 the dragon ?
- 10 Art thou not the same which dried the sea, the waters of the great
 deep ;
 That made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass
 over ?
- 11 Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return,
 And come with shouting unto Zion ;
 And everlasting joy shall be upon their head :
 Gladness and joy shall overtake them : sorrow and mourning have
 fled away.
- 12 I am He that comforteth you :
 Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall
 die,
 And of the son of man which shall be made as grass ;
- 13 And hast forgotten the LORD thy Maker,
 That stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundations of
 the earth ;
 And hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the
 oppressor,
 As he made ready to destroy :
 And where is the fury of the oppressor ?
- 14 The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed,
 And he shall not die in the dungeon, and his bread shall not
 fail.
- 15 For I am the LORD thy God, that rouseth the sea, and its waves
 roar :
 The LORD of hosts is his name.
- 16 And I have put my words in thy mouth,
 And I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand,
 To plant the heavens, and to lay the foundations of the earth,
 And to say unto Zion, Thou art my people.
- 17 Awake ! awake ! stand up, O Jerusalem,
 Which has drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his
 wrath :
 Thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung
 them out.
- 18 There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath
 brought forth ;

Neither is there any that taketh her by the hand
Of all the sons that she hath brought up.

- 19 These two things are befalling thee; who shall be sorry for thee?

Desolation, and ruin, and the famine, and the sword:
By whom shall I comfort thee?

- 20 Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net:

They are full of the wrath of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God.

- 21 Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine:

- 22 Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people,

Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling,

The dregs of the cup of my wrath;

Thou shalt no more drink it again:

- 23 But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee;
Which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over:
And thou hast laid thy back as the ground,
And as the street, to them that went over.

LII Awake! awake! put on thy strength, O Zion;
Put on thy garments of beauty, O Jerusalem, the holy city:
For henceforth there shall no more come into thee
The uncircumcised and the unclean.

- 2 Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem:
Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion:

- 3 For thus saith the LORD,
Ye have sold yourselves for nought: and ye shall be redeemed
without money.

- 4 For thus saith the Lord God,
My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there;
And the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

- 5 Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD,
That my people is taken away for nought?
Their oppressors exult, saith the LORD;
And my name continually every day is blasphemed.

- 6 Therefore my people shall know my name:
Therefore they shall know in that day,
That I am he that said, Behold, I am here.

- 7 How timely upon the mountains
Are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, publishing peace,
Bringing good tidings of good, publishing salvation,
Saying unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.

The voice of thy watchmen! They have lifted up the voice;

- 8 With the voice together shall they shout:
For they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD returneth to Zion.
Break forth into joy, shout together, ye waste places of Jerusalem:
9 For the LORD hath comforted his people,
He hath redeemed Jerusalem.

- 10 The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations;
And all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
- 11 Depart ye! depart ye! go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing;
Go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, ye armour-bearers of the LORD.
- 12 For ye shall not go out with haste, nor depart in flight:
For the LORD doth go before you; and the God of Israel brings up your rear.
- 13 Behold, my servant shall do wisely,
He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.
- 14 As many were astonished at thee;
(His visage was so marred more than any man,
And his form more than the sons of men:)
- 15 So shall he sprinkle many nations;
Kings shall shut their mouths before him:
For that which had not been told them have they seen;
And that which they had not heard have they perceived.

LIII

Who hath believed our report?

- And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?
- 2 For he shall grow up before him like a tender plant,
And as a root out of a dry ground:
He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him,
There is no beauty that we should desire him.
- 3 He is despised and rejected of men;
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:
And we hid as it were our faces from him;
He was despised, and we esteemed him not.
- 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:
Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
- 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities:
The chastisement of our peace was upon him;
And with his stripes we are healed.
- 6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned every one to his own way;
And the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
Yet he opened not his mouth:
As a lamb is brought to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before her shearers is dumb,
So he opened not his mouth.
- 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment:
And who among his generation will consider
That he was cut off, out of the land of the living,
For the transgression of my people:—stricken for them.
- 9 And he made his grave with the wicked,

- And with the rich in his death ;
 Although he had done no violence,
 Neither was any deceit in his mouth.
- 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief :
 When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,
 He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,
 And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
- 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied :
 By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many ;
 For he shall bear their iniquities.
- 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the many,
 And he shall divide the spoil with the strong ;
 Because he hath poured out his soul unto death :
 And he was numbered with the transgressors,
 And he bare the sin of many ;
 And he will make intercession for the transgressors.

- LIV Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear ;
 Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,
 Thou that didst not travail with child :
 For more are the children of the desolate
 Than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.
- 2 Enlarge the place of thy tent,
 And let them stretch forth the curtains of thy dwellings :
 Spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes ;
- 3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left ;
 And thy seed shall inherit the nations, and repeople the desolate
 cities.
- 4 Fear not ; for thou shalt not be ashamed :
 Neither be thou abashed ; for thou shalt not blush :
 For thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth,
 And shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any
 more.
- 5 For thy Maker is thine husband ; the LORD of hosts is his
 name ;
 And the Holy One of Israel thy redeemer ;
 The God of the whole earth shall he be called.
- 6 For the LORD hath recalled thee, as a wife forsaken and grieved
 in spirit,
 And as a wife of youth, of whom thy God said, She shall be put
 away.
- 7 For a small moment I forsook thee ;
 But with great mercies will I draw thee back again.
- 8 In a gush of wrath, I hid my face from thee for a moment ;
 But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee,
 Saith the LORD thy Redeemer.
- 9 For this is as the waters of Noah unto me :
 For as I sware that the waters of Noah should no more go over
 the earth ;
 So have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, and that I will
 not rebuke thee.

- 10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be overthrown,
But my kindness shall not depart from thee,
Neither shall the covenant of my peace be overthrown,
Saith the LORD that pitieth thee.
- 11 O thou afflicted, tempest-tossed, uncomforted !
Behold I lay thy stones in cement of vermillion,
And will foun thee upon sapphires :
- 12 And I will make thy battlements of rubies,
And thy gates of carbuncles,
And all thy borders of precious stones.
- 13 And all thy children shall be disciples of the LORD ;
And great shall be the peace of thy children.
- 14 In righteousness shalt thou be established :
Thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear :
And from destruction, for it shall not come near thee.
- 15 Behold, they shall gather, they shall gather, but not at my
signal :
Whoso hath gathered against thee shall fall away to thy side.
- 16 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the fire of coal,
And bringeth forth a weapon for its work ;
And I have created the waster to destroy.
- 17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper ;
And against every tongue that shall stand with thee in judgment,
thou shalt obtain thy cause.
This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,
And their justification from me :—
The LORD hath said it.

- LV Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,
And he that hath no money ; come ye, buy, and eat ;
Yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.
- 2 Wherefore will ye spend money for that which is not bread ?
And your labour for that which satisfieth not ?
Hearken, hearken unto me, and eat ye that which is good,
And your soul shall delight itself in fatness.
- 3 Incline your ear, and come unto me : hear, and your soul shall
live ;
And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure
mercies of David.
- 4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples,
A leader and commander to the peoples.
- 5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not ;
And nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee,
Because of the LORD thy God,
And for the Holy one of Israel ; for he hath glorified thee.
- 6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found,
Call ye upon him while he is near :
- 7 Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the evil man his thoughts :
And let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon
him ;

- And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.
 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
 Neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
 So are my ways higher than your ways,
 And my thoughts than your thoughts.
 10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and
 returneth not thither,
 Till it hath watered the earth, and made it bring forth and bud,
 And hath given seed to the sower, and bread to the eater :
 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth :
 It shall not return unto me void,
 Nor till it hath done that which I desired,
 And hath accomplished that whereto I sent it.
 12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace :
 The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into
 shouts,
 And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
 13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress,
 And instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle :
 And it shall be to the LORD for a name,
 For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.
- LVI Thus saith the LORD, keep ye justice, and do righteousness :
 For my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be
 revealed.
 2 Blessed is the man that shall do this, and the son of man that shall
 lay hold on it ;
 Keeping the sabbath from profaning it,
 And keeping his hand from doing any evil.
 3 And let not the foreigner that hath joined himself to the LORD,
 speak,
 Saying, The LORD will utterly separate me from his people :
 Neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.
 4 For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that shall keep my
 sabbaths,
 And choose the things that please me, and take hold of my
 covenant ;
 5 Even unto them will I give in mine house, and within my walls,
 A place and a name better than of sons and of daughters :
 I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.
 6 Also the foreigners, that join themselves to the LORD,
 To serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his
 servants,
 Every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and taketh
 hold of my covenant :
 7 Even them will I bring to my holy mountain,
 And make them joyful in my house of prayer :
 Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon
 mine altar ;
 For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all peoples.

- 8 This is the word of the Lord GOD, the gatherer of the outcasts of Israel:—

Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered.

- 9 All ye beasts of the field, come to devour,
Yea, all ye beasts in the forest.

- 10 His watchmen are all blind, they know not the danger;
They are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark—
Dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber:

- 11 And the dogs are greedy, they know not how to be satisfied,
And they, the shepherds, know not how to discern:
They are all of them turned to their own way, every one of them to his own gain.

- 12 Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink;
And to-morrow shall be as to-day, and much more abundant.

LVII The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart:
And merciful men are taken away, none considering
That the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.

- 2 He shall enter into peace:—

They shall rest in their beds:—Each one that walketh in his uprightness.

- 3 But ye—draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress,
The seed of the adulterer and the harlot:

- 4 Against whom do ye sport yourselves?
Against whom make ye a wide mouth, and put out the tongue?
Are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood,

- 5 Burning with lust for idols under every green tree,
Slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?

- 6 Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot:

Even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering.

Should I rest satisfied with these things?

- 7 Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed:
Even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.

- 8 And behind the door and the door-post hast thou placed thy memorial:

For thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up;

Thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them;
Thou hast loved their bed, thou hast provided room.

- 9 And thou wentest to the king with oil, and didst multiply thy perfumes,

And didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell.

- 10 Thou art wearied in the length of thy way;
Yet saidst thou not, There is no hope:
Thou hast yet found life in thine hand;
Therefore thou art not disheartened.

- 11 And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied,
And hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart?
Is it not because I hold my peace, and that of old, that thou wilt
not fear me?
- 12 I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; and they shall not
avail thee.
- 13 When thou criest, let thy assemblage of idols deliver thee;
But the wind shall carry them all away; a breath shall take them
off:
But he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land,
And shall inherit my holy mountain:—
- 14 And He shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way,
Take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.
- 15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,
Whose name is Holy;
I dwell in the high and holy place,
With him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the
contrite ones.
- 16 For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth:
For the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have
made.
- 17 For the iniquity of his covetousness am I wroth, and will smite
him:
I will hide me, and will be wroth,
For he has gone on frowardly in the way of his heart.
- 18 I have seen his ways, and I will heal him,
And I will lead him, and restore comforts unto him and to his
mourners:
- 19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off,
And to him that is near,
And I will heal him; saith the LORD.
- 20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, for it cannot rest,
And its waters cast up mire and dirt.
- 21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

LVIII

- Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
And show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob
their sins.
- 2 Yet they will seek me daily, and delight to know my ways,
As a nation that has done righteousness, and has not forsaken the
ordinance of their God:
- עֲשֵׂה They will ask of me the ordinances of justice: they will take de-
לִי light in approaching to God.
- 3 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou hast not seen?
Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou wilt take no
knowledge?
Behold, in the day of your fast, ye find pleasure,
And exact all your labours.
- 4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of
wickedness:

Ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

- 5 Shall it be like this, the fast that I will choose, the day of man's humbling himself?

Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?

Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

- 6 Is not this the fast that I will choose—

To loose the tight cords of wickedness, to undo the bonds of the yoke,

And to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

- 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry,

And that thou bring the wandering poor to thy house?

When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him;

And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

- 8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,

And thine health shall spring forth speedily:

And thy righteousness shall go before thee;

The glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.

- 9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer;

Thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am.

If thou wilt take away from the midst of thee the yoke,

The putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

- 10 And wilt draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul:

Then shall thy light rise in the darkness, and thy thick darkness be as the noon day:

- 11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually,

And satisfy thy soul in drought, and make strong thy bones:

And thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water,

Whose waters shall not fail.

- 12 And they that come of thee shall build the old waste places:

Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations;

And thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach,

The restorer of paths, that men may dwell there.

- 13 If thou wilt turn away thy foot from the sabbath,

From doing thy pleasure on my holy day;

And wilt call the sabbath a delight, and the LORD's holy day honourable;

And wilt honour him, not doing thine own ways,

Nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

- 14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD;

And I will make thee ride upon the high places of the earth,

And feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father:

For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

LIX

Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save;

Neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

But your iniquities have been separating between you and your God,

- And your sins have hid his face from you, that He doth not hear.
- 3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity;
Your lips have spoken lies, your tongue will utter perverseness.
- 4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth in truth:
They trust in vanity, and speak lies;
They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.
- 5 They have hatched cockatrice' eggs, and will weave the spider's web:
He that eateth of their eggs shall die, and the crushed egg shall hatch into a viper;
- 6 Their webs shall not become garments,
Neither shall they cover themselves with their works:
Their works are works of iniquity, and the doing of violence is in their hands.
- 7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood:
Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.
- 8 The way of peace they know not; and there is no justice in their goings:
They have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.
- 9 Therefore is justice far from us, neither will righteousness overtake us:
We wait for light, but behold darkness; for brightness, but we walk in thick darkness.
- 10 We grope for the wall like the blind, and like the eyeless we grope.
We stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places, as dead men.
- 11 We groan all like bears, and mourn sore like doves:
We look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.
- 12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us:
For our transgressions are with us; and our iniquities, we know them:—
- 13 In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and turning away backward from our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.
- 14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice will stand aloof:
For truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter:
- 15 Yea, truth was found wanting; and he that departed from evil made himself a prey.
And the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment:
- 16 And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was none to interpose:
Therefore His own arm brought salvation unto him; and His righteousness, it sustained him.

- 17 And He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head ;
And He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.
- 18 According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay,
Wrath to his adversaries, to his enemies their deserts :
To the islands he will repay their deserts.
- 19 And they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west,
And his glory from the rising of the sun.
For it shall come like a flood of war,
The spirit of the LORD lifting up a standard therein.
- 20 Then a redeemer shall come for Zion,
And for them that turn from transgression in Jacob :
The LORD hath said it.
- 21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD ;
My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth,
Shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed,
Nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth, and for ever.
- LX Arise ! Be light ! For thy light is come,
And the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.
For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples :
But the LORD shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.
- 3 And nations shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising.
- 4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see ;
All they gather themselves together, they come to thee :
Thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.
- 5 Then thou shalt see and brighten up, and thine heart shall throb and swell ;
Because the abundance of the sea shall be poured in upon thee,
The forces of the nations shall come unto thee.
- 6 A stream of camels shall cover thee, dromedaries of Midian and Ephah :
All they from Sheba shall come, they shall bring gold and incense ;
And they shall show forth the praises of the LORD with joy.
- 7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered for thee,
The rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee :
They shall come up with acceptance on mine altar,
And I will glorify my house of glory.
- 8 Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows ?
- 9 Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first,
To bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them,
For the name of the LORD thy God,

- And for the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.
- 10 And the sons of the stranger shall build up thy walls,
And their kings shall minister unto thee :
For in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy
on thee.
- 11 And thy gates shall be open continually ; they shall not be shut
day nor night ;
To bring unto thee the forces of the nations,
And their kings led in triumph.
- 12 For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish ;
Yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.
- 13 The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee,
The cypress, the pine tree, and the box together,
To beautify the place of my sanctuary ;
And I will make the place of my feet glorious.
- 14 And the sons of the oppressors shall come bending unto thee ;
And all they that despised thee shall bow down to the soles of thy
feet ;
And they shall call thee, The City of the LORD, The Zion of the
Holy One of Israel.
- 15 Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went
through thee,
I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.
- 16 And thou shalt suck the milk of nations, and shalt suck the breast
of kings :
And thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy saviour,
And the mighty One of Jacob thy redeemer.
- 17 For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver,
And for wood brass, and for stones iron ;
And I will make thy government peace, and thy rulers righteousness.
- 18 Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,
Wasting nor destruction within thy borders ;
But thou shalt call thy walls, Salvation, and thy gates, Praise.
- 19 The sun shall be no more thy light by day ;
Neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee :
But the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God
thy glory.
- 20 Thy sun shall no more go down ; neither shall thy moon withdraw
itself :
For the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy
mourning shall be ended.
- 21 And the people shall be all righteous : they shall inherit the land
for ever,
The branch of my planting, the work of my hands, to glorify
myself.
- 22 A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong
nation :
I the LORD will hasten it in its time.

- LXI The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me ;
 Because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto
 the meek ;
 He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
 To proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the eyes
 to them that are bound ;
- 2 To proclaim a year of grace for the LORD, and day of vengeance
 for our God ;
 - 3 To comfort all that mourn ; to appoint unto them that mourning
 Zion,
 To give them a diadem for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning,
 The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ;
 And they shall be called, Oaks of righteousness,
 The planting of the LORD, to glorify himself.
 - 4 And they shall build the old wastes,
 They shall raise up the former desolations,
 And they shall repair the waste cities,
 The desolations of many generations.
 - 5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,
 And the sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen and your vine-
 dressers.
 - 6 And ye, ye shall be named, The priests of the LORD :
 Men shall call you, The ministers of our God :
 Ye shall eat the riches of the nations,
 And in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.
 - 7 For your shame ye shall have double ;
 And for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion :
 Therefore in their land they shall possess the double :
 Everlasting joy shall be unto them.
 - 8 For I am the LORD, loving justice, hating robbery,
 And I will give their hire truly, and I will make an everlasting
 covenant with them.
 - 9 And their seed shall be known among the nations, and their off-
 spring among the peoples :
 All that see them shall acknowledge them,
 That they are a seed which the LORD hath blessed.
 - 10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
 My soul shall be joyful in my God ;
 For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation,
 He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness,
 As a bridegroom adjusteth his priestly turban,
 And as a bride arrayeth her jewels.
 - 11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,
 And as the garden causeth its plant to spring forth ;
 So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring
 forth before all the nations.

- LXII For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace,
 And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
 Until the righteousness thereof go forth as a shining light,
 And the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth ;

- 2 And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory :
 And thou shalt be called by a new name,
 Which the mouth of the LORD shall name.
- 3 And thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD,
 And a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.
- 4 Thou shalt no more be called, Forsaken ;
 Neither shall thy land any more be called, Desolate :
 But thou shalt be named, My own Delight ;
 And thy land, the Married One.
 For the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.
- 5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee :
 And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.
- 6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem,
 Which shall never hold their peace day nor night :
- 7 Ye remembrancers of the LORD, keep not silence, and give him no rest,
 Till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.
- 8 The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by his arm of strength,
 Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies ;
 And the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured :
- 9 But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD ;
 And they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.
- 10 Go through, go through the gates ; prepare ye the way of the people ;
 Cast up, cast up the highway ; gather out the stones ;
 Lift up a standard for the peoples.
- 11 Behold the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world,
 Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh ;
 Behold, his reward is with him, and his hire before him.
- 12 And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD :
 And thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

LXIII Who is this that cometh from Edom ? with bright dyed garments from Bozrah ?
 This that is glorious in his apparel, advancing in the greatness of his strength ?

I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

- 2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel,
 And thy garments like him that treadeth in the winepress ?
- 3 I have trodden the winepress alone ;
 And of the peoples there was not a man with me :
 And I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury ;

- And their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment.
- 4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.
- 5 And I look, but there is none to help ; and wonder, but there is none to uphold :
And mine own arm hath brought salvation unto me ; and my fury, it upholds me.
- 6 And I will tread down the peoples in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury,
And I will bring down their strength to the earth.
- 7 I will mention the lovingkindness of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD,
According to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us,
And the great goodness toward the house of Israel,
Which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies,
And according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.
- 8 For he said, They only are my people, children that will not lie :
And he became their Saviour.
- 9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them :
In his love and in his pity He himself redeemed them ;
And he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.
- 10 But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit ;
Therefore he was turned to be their enemy,
He himself fought against them.
- 11 Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying,
Where is he that brought them up out of the sea
With the shepherd of his flock ?
Where is he that put his holy Spirit within him ?
- 12 That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm,
Dividing the water before them, to make him an everlasting name ?
- 13 Leading them through the deep, — as an horse in the desert, they shall not stumble :
- 14 As cattle go down into the valley, the spirit of the LORD shall make them to rest :
So didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.
- 15 Look down from heaven,
And behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory :
Where are thy zeal and thy mighty deeds,
The yearning of thy heart and of thy soul toward me ?
Are they restrained ?
- 16 For Thou art our father,
Though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not :
Thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer ; thy Name is from everlasting.
- 17 O LORD, why wilt thou make us to wander from thy ways,
And harden our hearts from thy fear ?

Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

18 Our enemies have possessed the people of thy holiness for a little while ;

They have trodden down thy sanctuary.

19 We are thine of old : thou wast not their king, they were not called by thy name.

LXIV Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down,

That the mountains might quake at thy presence,

2 As fire burneth stubble, as fire boileth water,

To make thy name known to thine enemies,

That the nations may tremble at thy presence !

3 In doing terrible things which we look not for,

Oh that thou wouldest come down,

That the mountains might quake at thy presence.

4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard,

Nor perceived by the ear,

Neither hath the eye seen, a God beside thee,

Who will do such things for him that waiteth for him.

5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness,

Those that remember thee in thy ways :

Behold, thou art wroth ; for we have sinned :

Thy ways are everlasting, and we shall be saved.

6 But we were all as an unclean thing,

And all our righteousnesses as filthy rags ;

And we all did fade as a leaf ; and our iniquities like the wind will take us away.

And there is none that calleth upon thy name,

That stirreth up himself to take hold of thee :

For thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

8 But now, O LORD, thou art our father ;

We are the clay, and thou our potter ;

And we all are the work of thy hand.

9 Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever :

Behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.

10 Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.

11 Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, Is burned up with fire : and all our pleasant things are laid waste.

12 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD ?

Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore ?

LXV I have answered them that asked not for me ;

I am found of them that sought me not :

I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

2 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, Which walk in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts ;

- 3 A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face ;
Which sacrifice in gardens, and burn incense upon altars of brick ;
- 4 Which sit among the graves, and lodge in the monuments ;
Which eat swine's flesh, and with broth of abominable things in
their vessels ;
- 5 Which say Keep to thyself, come not near to me ; for I am holier
than thou.
- These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.
- 6 Behold, it is written before me :
I will not keep silence, till I have recompensed, even recompensed
into their bosom,
- 7 Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith
the LORD :
For they have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed
me upon the hills :
And I will measure their former work into their bosom.
- 8 Thus saith the LORD,
As the new wine is found in a cluster, and one saith,
Destroy it not ; for a blessing is in it :
So will I do for my servant's sakes, not to destroy the whole.
- 9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob,
And out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains :
And mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.
- 10 And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks,
And the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in,
For my people that have sought me.
- 11 But ye that have forsaken the LORD, that forget my holy
mountain,
That prepare a table for Fortune,
And that fill a drink offering unto Destiny,
- 12 I have destined you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to
the slaughter :
Because when I called, ye did not answer ; when I spake, ye did
not hear ;
But did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I
delighted not.
- 13 Therefore thus saith the LORD God,
Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry :
Behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty :
Behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed :
- 14 Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart,
But ye shall cry for sorrow of heart,
And shall howl for anguish of spirit.
- 15 And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen :
And the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another
name :
- 16 By which he who blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself
in the God of truth ;
And he that sweareth in the earth by it, shall swear by the God
of truth ;

- Because the former troubles are forgotten,
And because they are hid from mine eyes.
- 17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth :
And the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.
- 18 But be ye glad, and rejoice for ever, in that which I create :
For, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.
- 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people :
And the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the
voice of crying.
- 20 No more shall the sucking babe be carried thence to burial,
Nor an old man that hath not filled his days :
For the child shall die an hundred years old ;
And the sinner dying an hundred years old shall be deemed
accursed.
- 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them ;
And they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.
- 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit ; they shall not plant, and
another eat :
For as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people,
And my chosen shall wear out the work of their hands.
- 23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth trouble :
For they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring
with them.
- 24 And it shall come to pass,
That before they call, I will answer ; and while they are yet speak-
ing I will hear.
- 25 The wolf and the little lamb shall feed as one, and the lion shall
eat straw like the bullock :
And dust shall be the serpent's meat.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith
the LORD.

LXVI

- Thus saith the LORD,
The heavens are my throne, and the earth is my footstool :
Where is the house that ye will build unto me ?
And where is the place of my rest ?
- 2 For all those things did mine hand make,
And they all were, saith the LORD :
But to this man will I have regard,
To the poor and contrite in spirit,
And who tremblingly reveres my word.
- 3 Slaying an ox, killing a man ;
Sacrificing a lamb, breaking a dog's neck ;
Offering an oblation, offering swine's blood ;
Burning incense, blessing an idol :
Yea, they have chosen their own ways,
And their soul delighteth in their abominations.
- 4 I also will choose their vexations, and will bring their fears upon
them ;
Because when I called, none did answer ; when I spake, they did
not hear :

But they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

5 Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremblingly revere his word;

Your brethren that hate you, and cast you out for my name's sake, have said,

The LORD shall be glorified, and we shall see your joy :—
But they shall be ashamed.

6 A voice of tumult from the city, a voice from the temple,
A voice of the LORD, rendering recompence to his enemies.

7 Before she travailed, she brought forth;

Before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.

8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things?

Shall a country be brought forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once?

For Zion hath travailed, and at once brought forth her children.

9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD :

Shall I beget and shut up the womb? saith thy God.

10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her :

Rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her :

11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied, from the breasts of her consolations :

That ye may milk out, and be delighted, from the abundance of her glory.

12 For thus saith the LORD,

Behold, I extend peace to her like a river,

And the glory of the Gentiles like an over-flowing stream :

And ye shall suck,

Ye shall be borne upon the side, and be dandled upon the knees.

13 As a man whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you ;

And ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

14 And ye shall see and your heart shall rejoice,

And your bones shall flourish like an herb :

And the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants,

And his indignation toward his enemies.

15 For, behold, the LORD will come with fire,

And his chariots like a whirlwind,

To render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

16 For by fire and by his sword doth the LORD plead with all flesh :

And the slain of the LORD are many.

17 They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves, for the gardens,
Following one in the midst,

Eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse,

Shall be consumed together : the LORD hath declared it.

18 And I know their works and their thoughts :

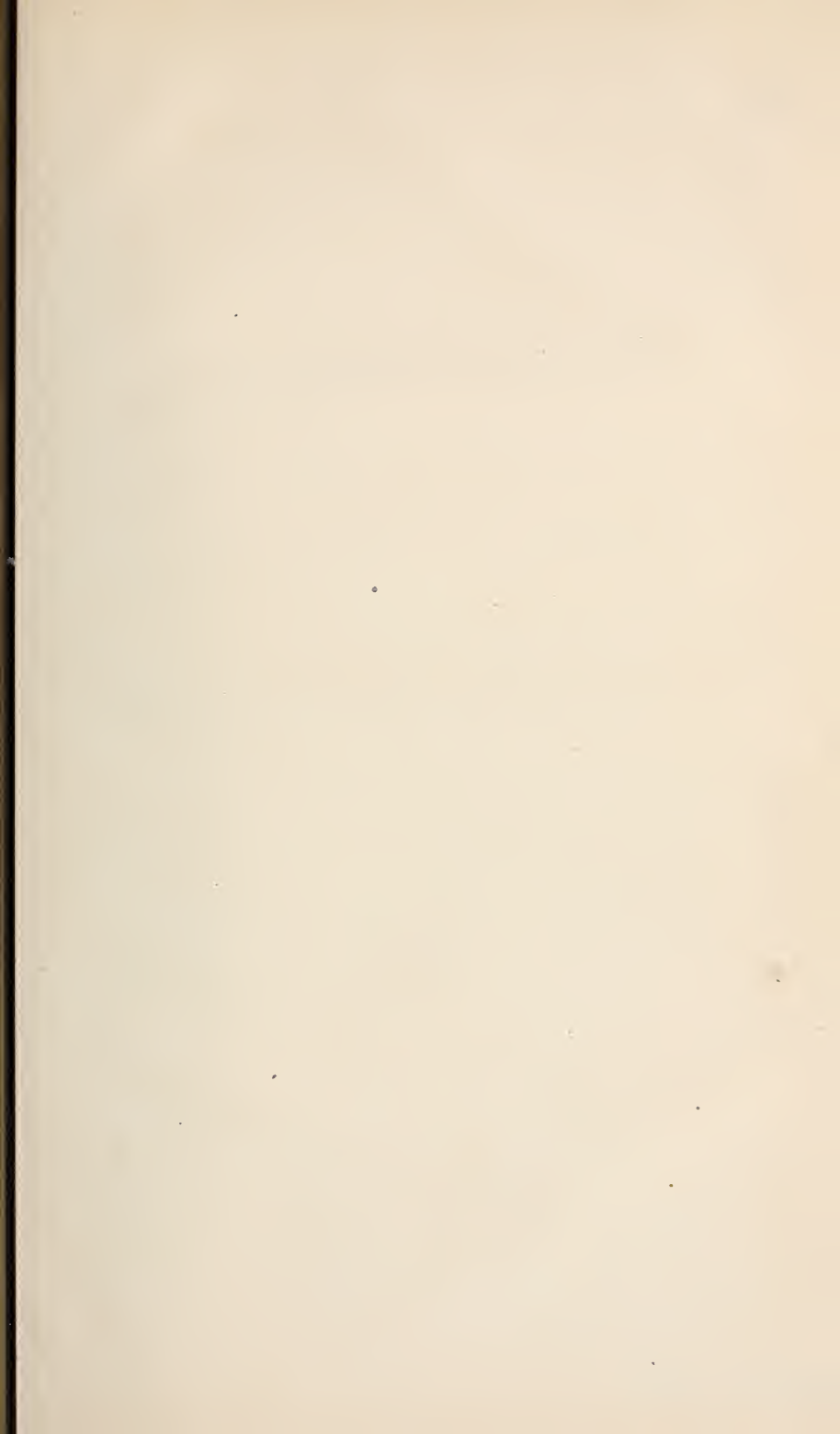
The time is come to gather all nations and tongues;

And they are come, and see my glory.

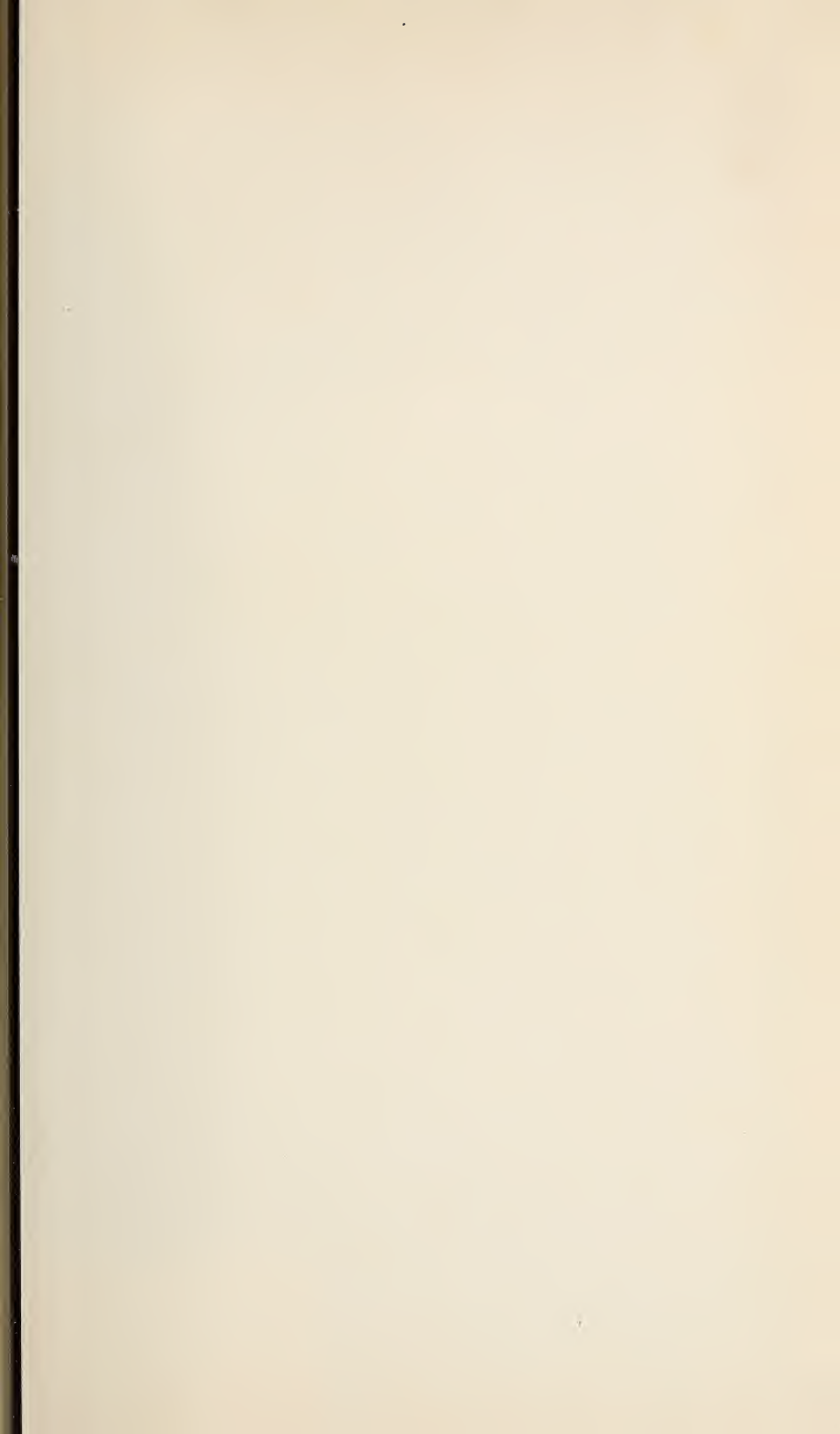
19 And I have set a sign among them,

- And I have sent the escaped of them unto the nations,
To Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow,
To Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off,
That had not heard my fame, neither seen my glory ;
And they have declared my glory among the Gentiles.
- 20 And they have brought all your brethren, out of all nations, an offering unto the LORD,
With horses, and with chariots, and with litters, and with mules, and with dromedaries,
To my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD,
As the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.
- 21 And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD.
- 22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I make, Remain before me, saith the LORD,
So shall your seed and your name remain.
- 23 And it shall come to pass, that from new moon to new moon, And from sabbath to sabbath,
Shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.
- 24 And they shall go forth,
And look upon the carcasses of the men that have revolted from me :
For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched ;
And they shall be an abhorrence unto all flesh.

THE END.



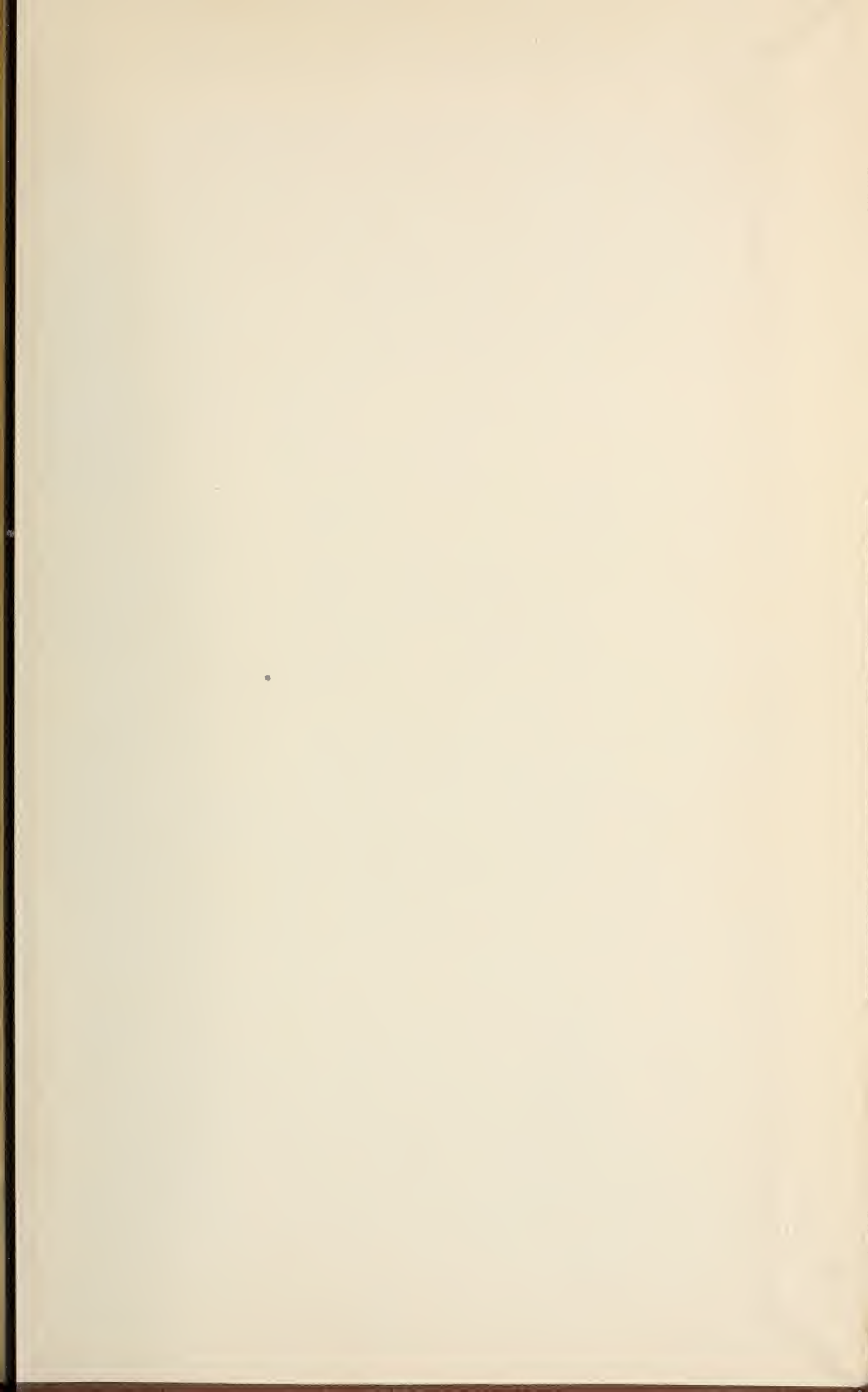
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